
THE POETRY OF SHAH ABDAL -LATIF

DR. DURR E SHAHWAR SAYED

DEDICATED TO

my father, Ghulam Murtaza Sayed, with
love and gratitude, and also to the memory of
my mother, Bibi Mariam.

”سَوُ بَسْرِنِ پائي جي تندُ برابَرِ توريان
اُنل اوڏا همر تئي، جيڏا همر بيجل پُرائي.“

THE POETRY OF SHAH ABD AL-LATIF

Dr. Durreshahwar Sayed



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PUBLISHER'S NOTE

"Latfliyat", or studies on the life and poetry of Shah Abdul Latif (1689–1752) has been well-recognized as a distinct discipline in academic circles. Establishment of a Latif-Chair in Karachi University in Pakistan, and acceptance of theses for Ph.D on Latif and publication of a host of books on his life and Art in Sind and abroad provide ample proof of this fact.

In addition to countless articles and unpublished theses on this subject, standard publications in English alone exceed fifty. The earliest two, which introduced the Great Shah of Sind to English readers were written by Richard F. Burton in 1851 viz: '*History of Sind*' and '*Sind and the Races that Inhabit the Valley of Indus*'. The two works aroused such an interest that six more books were written in the same century viz: (a) F.J. Goldsmith's '*Sasul*' London, (1863), (b) W. Southey's '*Life of Shah Abdul Latif*', London, (1870), (c) Dayaram G. Sigma's '*Something about Sind*' (1882), (d) S.U. Mirza Qaleech Beg's '*Life of Shah Abdul Latif Bhittai*' (1887), (e) Lilaram Vatanmal Lal-wani's '*The Life, Religion and Poetry of Shah Abdul Latif*' (1890), and (f) Jhamatmal Vasvani's '*Notes on Risalo*' (1895).

The Nineteenth century also witnessed the earliest publication of Shah-Jo-Risalo (the full text of Shah's poetry in print). It was brought out in 1866, by a German Orientalist Dr. Ernest Trumpp (1828–85). The following year, a local Sindhi Scholar, Qazi Ibrahim, produced a litho-print of the *Risalo* which was published by the Government of Bombay Presidency, and is hence known as the Bombay edition. Towards the end of the century a Sindhi Hindu educationist, Diwan Tarachand Shuaqiram

Advani (1850–1938), presented his compilation of the *Risalo* which was published by the Education Department of the Bombay Government. It was called the Official Edition (1900), which went through three reprints upto 1923. In all, five different versions of Shah–Jo–Risalo were published from 1866 to 1900.

The twentieth century brought *Latifiyat* in full focus during which more than fifteen different editions of the original text of the *Risalo* have been brought out together with a total of twenty seven studies on it. To-date more than twenty different editions of the *Risalo* are available for consultation by scholars. These editions are based on thirty-one manuscripts, unearthed so far. The earliest manuscript of the *Risalo* dates back to 1780 i.e. only 28 years after the demise of the Shah (1752). It is known as the 'Bulri-manuscript'. The latest manuscript was prepared in 1963, which was in fact reproduced from memory of one of Shah's *faqirs* in the 7th generation, named Punhal Faqir Juno. The number of original manuscripts of Latif's poetry is thus supplemented, generation after generation, from memorized versions as sung and recited by *faqirs* of his *dargah* (Shrine). Sindhians have so assiduously committed the *Risalo* to memory that even today we come across tens of persons who recite and sing it by heart.

Besides preservation and transmission of Shah–Jo–Risalo to succeeding generations, the culture of Sind is also proud of keeping alive the tradition of Shah–Jo–Raag (the music of Shah) in its original form. Latif introduced a novel synthesis of Sindhi music sung on a musical instrument called *Damboor*, which was also a modified form of the traditional instrument called *Dambooro*. The same music continues to be sung on the same five-string instrument at the *dargah* of Latif at Bhit Shah on every night. Such is the enduring art of the great Latif, which stands established as an institution in Sind for over two centuries now.

In this short note, it is not possible to describe all the literary and research work in the field of *Latifiyat* produced at home and

abroad during the current century. A bird's eyeview may nonetheless be called for: Beginning with Aitken's 'Gazetteer of the province of Sind' (1907), and ending at Dr. H.T. Sorley's thesis '*Shah Abdul Latif of Bhit*' (1940), it is a period of getting to know Shah in English. Dr. Annemarie Schimmel has introduced Shah to German readers also. After independence great works have been produced both in India and Pakistan and Ph.D theses have been submitted to Delhi, Sind and foreign universities which need a separate space for proper mention. Some works on Shah have in the meantime also appeared in Arabic, Persian, Hindi, Urdu besides English, German and Sindhi.

Sindhi Adabi Board alone has published fourteen works, which refer to Shah Latif and his poetry, either exclusively or in part. Sindhi Adabi Board as successor to the Board of Control for Sindhi Literature (1941), was established in 1951. From 1951 to-date, the Board has produced more than 350 literary works. The Board's main functions centre around preservation, promotion and further development of Sindhi literature. Besides, Shah Abdul Latif Bhit Shah Cultural Centre, in collaboration with the Sind Provincial Department of Culture and Tourism, has also produced three very important works on Latifiyat viz. G. Allana's '*Selections from the Risalo, Life and Work of Shah Abdul Latif*' by S.U. Mirza Qaleech Beg, and the first complete translation of *Shah-Jo-Risalo* into English by Agha M. Yakub. In translations, Shaikh Ayaz's Urdu versified translation of *Shah-Jo-Risalo* is by itself a land-mark. Among the exponents of Shah's poetry, Dr. N.A. Baloch a prolific scholar of Sind, and Late Prof: Akram Ansari have immensely contributed to a clearer understanding of Shah's great message.

The latest addition to Sindhi Adabi Board's publication on the subject is a dissertation of Dr. Durreshahwar Sayed accepted by the University of Edinburgh (UK). She is the first Sindhi lady to achieve such an excellence. Dr. Durreshahwar has brought to bear her original mind on her work and has produced a brilliant

study on the poetry of Shah Abdul Latif. She has explored sources untouched so far, to which perhaps could be traced the mainsprings of this immortal classic of Sindhi Language. In the revelatory words of Shah Latif himself:

O'Friend, why are you still inclined
to waste paper and ink....
Go rather forth and try to find
the source where words were formed.●

Jamshoro;
September 19,1988.

HABIBULLAH SIDDIQUI
Secretary
Sindhi Adabi Board,
Jamshoro.

PREFACE

The present work was originally undertaken for the Ph.D. thesis and submitted at the University of Edinburgh in 1984. In this book an attempt has been made to treat hitherto some neglected aspects of the work of Shah Abd al-Latif (1689–1752 AD). After the introductory chapter, the assertive role of women, in particular, has been analysed in detail, whose highmindedness, perseverance and fortitude has been praised and admired by the poet almost as the main vehicle and burden of his poetry.

There has been considerable controversy amongst Hindu and Muslim scholars as to the debt owed by Shah Abd al-Latif to Hinduism and Islam, with both sides on occasion adopting extreme attitudes. I have endeavoured to present a balanced view in that context of the local religious and cultural milieu in which our poet lived.

An effort has been further made to show the influence that Yogis and association with Yogis exerted on the poet.

In the last two chapters some resemblances and differences have been traced out between the works of the two great Persian poets, Farid al-Din Attar and Jalal al-Din Rumi, and the *Risalo* of Shah Abd al-Latif. Through this study, it has been revealed that the Sindhi poet though standing within the great tradition of Persian Sufi literature, at the same time draws firmly on local Sindhi culture and folk lore for his inspiration.

All the translations quoted in the book are made by the author herself. The translation is not merely changing words from one language to another, but it involves many more things. In some cases it is hard to find equivalent and accurate words in the other language, and one just makes good with a nearer word to the original.

The most difficult thing about translating or writing about a poet in a foreign language is the problem of coping with the cultural differences. The poetry in a certain language is not a collection of mere words, but it consists of ideals, hopes and fears and admiration for certain norms or values which that society holds dear. But those same values may not mean anything to the other society. For instance, the concept of *loe ji laj, pag jo nang*, or *saam* will make no sense to Western readers, therefore some explanations become a necessity. Moreover there are certain objects or expressions considered good in one culture but bad in another. For example the bird 'owl' in Sindhi poetry is a sign of evil or bad luck, whereas in the West it is an omen of good luck. To call a girl 'moon faced' in the East is a compliment to her, but a Western girl will take it as an insult. Any way, I have tried to overcome such odds to the best of my ability.

I am not claiming that this is an extensive and all-embracing work produced about Shah Abd al-Latif. But every effort has been made to consult various editions of the *Risalo*, some manuscripts, books, magazines, Seminar papers and whatever material was available in various British libraries and museums. I also had the chance to see some contemporary material regarding the subject that was sent to me by my friends and relations.

I am very grateful to Sindhi Adabi Board for financing the publication of my book, and also particularly to Mr. Habibullah Siddiqui, Secretary to the Board, who took personal interest in it. I must express my thanks to Mr. Ibrahim Joyo who has spared his precious time in not only going through the work, but doing the tedious job of its proof reading as well.

For producing this work, I have been indebted for valuable references to Professor Annemarie Schimmel of Harvard University and Dr. Christopher Shackle of London University. I take this opportunity to offer my gratitude to both of these distinguished scholars for their personal guidance and interest as well.

I am also obliged to Professor Mantgomry Watt, late Professor Elwell Sulton and Dr. Carole Hillenbrand who were my supervisors at the University of Edinburgh while I was doing research for my thesis. Many thanks are due to Dr. Ahmad Tahri and Dr. Philsooph for helping me to understand Sufism and Persian poetry from the Iranian point of view.

I am also grateful to all my friends, colleagues, teachers and others who have directly or indirectly helped me, either by sending me material for my work or wrote me letters of encouragement while I stayed abroad. Some of the names of friends and elders to whom I feel specially indebted are: Mrs. Daudpota, Mrs. Mumtaz Shaikh, Miss. Tanveer Junejo, Mr. and Mrs. Khan, Abida Awan, Soraya Dastgheib, Miss. Pauline Wenner, Miss. Crawford, Widad Laradi, Charles Nicodeme and many others.

I am unable to find words to acknowledge the gratitude and great debt I owe to the encouragement and constant moral and financial support of my father. He not only generously supported me throughout my stay in Europe, but it was all due to his inspiration and kind prefeiment that what appeared impossible for me to begin with became not only possible but a matter of joy to pursue and attain. I also wish to thank especially my sister Zarintaj for regularly writing me, and also other brothers and sisters for their consideration, and cooperation while I stayed abroad.

Lastly, a word to my esteemed readers. I am conscious that mine only is one of many studies of Shah Abd al-Latif, his poetry and his message, which, from the time of its dispensation, has been the name which has remained on the lips of the People of Sind, old and young, men and women, literate and illiterate, and which they have since revered and nurtured as the very fate of their national culture. The poetry of Shah Abd al-Latif is the mood and habit round which the mind of Sindhi People revolves; it is the instrument of their cohesion as a people. None other than he understood and articulated their genius and laid out the path for

them to follow and reach out for their destiny which too he identified for them. His was the eye, deep and comprehensive, over their history and their land, its ethos, both physical and human; and what he conveyed to them of his insight lies embodied in Sindhi, their mother tongue, and in a form and diction, unique and unsurpassable, which they well understood, and the hearing, reading, recitation and singing of which transports them to heights of blissful joy and personal triumph. His *Risalo*, the message, saw them emerge from two hundred years long night of Mongol slavery and step into a period of freedom, in the life-giving glow of which they walked for the next one and a half centuries till the British conquest of their land in 1843, when they were once again enveloped in a century-long darkness of alien subjection. In state of subjugation people's faith in their national poet for salvation gained all the greater efflorescence and burns even today in their heart as radiantly as before. Shah Abd al-Latif, his traumatic times for Sind, his superb art, and his matchless wisdom, have been studied and appreciated by scholars, both native and foreign, from various view-points. Mine too is an effort in the line, but the aspects high-lighted, I dare claim, have a signification specifically their own, as I have noted in the opening paragraphs above. If any kind reader of my humble work is able to find even a glimpse of that signification while taking the trouble of going through it, I will feel amply rewarded.

Karachi
June 23, 1988

Durreshahwar Sayed

THE POETRY OF SHAH ABD AL-LATIF

CHAPTER 1

PART I

THE HISTORICAL AND LITERARY BACKGROUND IN SIND IN THE PERIOD PRECEDING THE LIFETIME OF SHAH ABD AL-LATIF

a) The historical background

At the time of the Muslim conquest of Sind, the area was governed by Raja Dahir, a Brahman ruler. As is well-known, it was Muhammad b. Qasim who at the behest of Hajjaj b. Yusuf was sent on a campaign to conquer Sind and the lands of the Indus valley.¹ Muhammad b. Qasim reached first the port of Debal (the present day city of Thatta) and then captured important forts in Sind, such as Nerunkot (modern Hyderabad Sind) and Sehwan. Having crossed the Indus river, he pursued and killed Raja Dahir at the fort of Rawar. Later, his son was also defeated and put to death. Thus began Arab Muslim government in Sind, an area in which under Brahman rule Zoroastrianism, Buddhism and other faiths had flourished alongside Hinduism.

With the accession of the Abbasids in 750 A.D., Sind continued to be ruled by governors sent from the central Islamic world. As in other peripheral areas, however, Abbasid control in Sind had already slackened by the middle of the ninth century. Two independent states were established in Sind, one centred on Multan and the other at Mansura, stretching from there to the sea, an area which broadly coincides with the present day province of Sind. Sind remained at least nominally under the suzerainty of the Abbasid caliphate at Baghdad but the administration

1. From time immemorial, Sind had been divided into three districts, Lar (to the south), Wicholo (central Sind) and Siro (to the north).

of the area was in the hands of local people, many of whom had already, for a variety of motives, embraced Islam.¹ Regular trade links were established overland to Persia by way of Qandahar and Ghazna, whilst by sea Sind had commercial relations with Ceylon, China and other points east.²

In the early eleventh century Sind was plundered and conquered by Sultan Mahmud of Ghazna³ who used the area to prosecute *jihad* and to find booty to finance his expensive military campaigns in eastern Persia. He felt, however, little loyalty to Sind itself, which was not the centre of his operations.

Ghaznavid authority in Sind was overthrown in 1032 by a local chieftain, Ibn Sumar, whose descendants were to rule lower Sind for more than three centuries. Sumra authority did not extend to upper Sind and Multan, an area which was under the control of dynasties such as the Ghurids, the Khiljis and the Tughluqs.⁴

Sumra rule in Sind was replaced by that of the Sammas, another local family, who governed from Thatta whilst recognising the overall authority of the Tughluq sultans of Delhi to whom they paid an annual tribute.⁵

After the collapse of Samma rule, Sind was destined to be governed briefly by small dynasties such as the Arghuns (1521–54) and the Tarkhans (1554–91) before being subsumed into the Mughal empire.⁶

The Kalhoras were religious mendicants who had been prominent in Sind since the Samma period. They ruled Sind, whilst

1. Haig, W., *The Cambridge History of India*, Cambridge, 1928, Vol. III, pp. 9–10.
2. Hughes, A. W., *Gazetteer of the Province of Sind*, London, 1976, p. 26.
3. For a bibliography on the Ghaznavids, cf. C. E. Bosworth, *The Ghaznavids*, Edinburgh, 1963.
4. Lane-poole, S., *Medieval India*, London, 1917, p. 49; Masumi, M. M., *Tarikh-i-Masumi*, Hyderabad Sind, 1953, pp. 41–4.
5. Hughes, op. cit., pp. 27–8.
6. Haig, op. cit., pp. 501–3; Hughes, op. cit., p. 30.

usually acknowledging the overall authority of the Mughals, although they were at times disobedient to their overlords and punished for it. The two Kalhora rulers who were in power during the life-time of Shah Abd al-Latif were Yar Muhammad and his son Nur Muhammad. The latter gained full control of Sind before the advent of the Persian ruler, Nadir Shah, whom he vigorously opposed. Nadir Shah imprisoned the Kalhora ruler in the fort of Umarkot and was released upon payment of a tribute and on condition that the three sons of Nur Muhammad should be taken away as hostages. After the assassination of Nadir Shah in 1747 the three Kalhora princes returned to Sind. When Nur Muhammad died there was fraternal civil war between his three sons from 1756–8, resulting in the eventual triumph of Ghulam Shah who ruled Sind until 1772.

The great Sindhi poet, Shah Abd al-Latif who forms the subject of this study, was destined to experience the impact of internal political weakness within the sub-continent, as well as the effect of attacks from Muslim neighbours from Iran and Afghanistan. Mughal power was in full decline during his lifetime, although how this affected the poet personally is not clear.

b) The literary background

As far as written records are concerned it would appear that poetry in the Sindhi language was composed as early as the Sumra period (1032–1350).¹ According to Schimmel, from the accounts of Arab travellers and geographers of the 9th and 10th centuries, it appears that Arabic was spoken in Sind side by side with the regional language, Sindhi. A single 'Sindhi' verse which was recited by a visitor at the Abbasid court has been preserved, but it is in such a distorted form that a grammatical analysis cannot be made of it.²

1. Junejo Abd al-Jabbar, *Qadim Sha'iri-te hik Nazar*, Hyderabad Sind, 1967, p.24.
2. Schimmel, A.M. 'Sindhi Literature', in Jan Gonda, ed., *History of Indian Literature*, Wiesbaden, 1974, Vol.III, part 2,3.

L.H. Ajvani argues that prior to Sumra rule no specimen of Sindhi poetry has survived. The 'Sindhi verse' which is said to belong to the Abbasid period is not in the Sindhi language at all. According to him 'the Sindhi literature of the Hindu period and pre-Sumra period has perished beyond recall'.¹

According to the reports of al-Biruni who visited Sind and Hind between 1017 and 1030 there were three scripts in use in Sind – Ardhanagri, Saindhu and Malwari.²

From the time of the Arab conquest of Sind in 711, Arabic was the language of the court and of literature. During the Ghaznavid and Ghurid period the Persian language began to prosper for literary purposes and had the patronage of the ruling class.³ Nevertheless the Arabic language was always encouraged, for it had religious significance, even for non-Arab rulers.

During the Sumra and Samma periods (1032–1520), the use of the Sindhi language was encouraged, although Persian also continued to prosper. The literary history of this period remains, according to Badavi, shrouded in obscurity. Certain folk-stories, such as those associated with Sasui Punhu, Umar Marui and Mumal Rano, have, however, been traced to this period.⁴

In the Mughal period, Persian was considered the literary language *par excellence*. Sindhi was of course the language of communication but as a literary medium its use was not encouraged by the ruling class.⁵

According to Junejo, the first poetry in Sindhi is said to have been epic. The first extant example would appear to be *Dodo*

1. Ajvani, L.H. *History of Sindhi Literature*, New Delhi, 1970, p.17.

2. *Ibid.*

3. Badavi, Lutf Allah, *Tazkirah Lutfi*, Hyderabad Sind, 1954–55, pp.37 and 74.

4. *Ibid.*

5. *Ibid.*

and *Chanesar*, written by an anonymous author. This is dated to some time in the Sumra period in Sind (1032–1350). The poem describes a fraternal power struggle in Sind and reflects a keen political awareness on the part of the poet.¹

The Sumra period is important in the literary history of Sind because of the *ginans* (or *jnans*) (verses) of Pir Nur al-Din (also known as Satguru Nur) who came to Sind around 1079 and of *pirs* such as Shams Multani (1201–67) and Sadr al-Din (1290–1409). Their *ginans* were written in Khojki Sindhi, Multani, Gujarati and Punjabi and are religious and philosophical in nature, containing a blend of mystical ideas from Sufi and Vedantic thought.² These *ginans* were written in lyrical form, like the later *kafiyun* of Sindhi poetry, which were meant to be recited or sung. The Ismaili pirs of Sind, such as these, converted a large number of Hindus to Islam through their preaching, calling their new converts Khojas.³

Later during the Samma rule in Sind (1350–1520) various poets wrote on subjects such as Sufism and philosophy. In fact, the foundations of Sufi poetry in Sind were laid in this period by poets such as Shaikh Hammad, Qazi Qazan, Ishaq Ahangar (the blacksmith), Mamui Faqir, Ali Shirazi, Pir Murad and others. Few of their verses are extant but by reading those that have survived, one has the distinct impression that they form part of a much more extensive corpus of poetry, which was, moreover, mature. Among these poets, Qazi Qazan (d.1551) is the most prominent.⁴

1. This epic narrates the heroic deeds of Dodo, who though younger than Chanesar was made ruler of Sind by the people. Chanesar resented this, and invited Ala' al-Din Khilji, the ruler of India, and after joining his forces, attacked Dodo. Dodo fought bravely with all his people and Chanesar's son, who was his son-in-law, but died on the battlefield. His sister Bhagul Bai and other women of the family burnt themselves alive to save their honour and that of Sind.
Junejo op. cit. p.24.
2. Jotvani, M., *Sindhi Literature and Society*, New Delhi, 1979, p.4.
3. Baloch, N.A., *Sind Through the Centuries*, Karachi, 1975, pp. 13–18.
4. Baloch, N.A., *Sindhi boli-ji Mukhtasir Tarikh*, Hyderabad Sind, 1980, vol.1.

He was a man of learning, well-versed in the religious sciences and Sufism.¹ He played a prominent role in the politics of Sind. In his time the Arghuns defeated the last Samma ruler near Thatta in 1520, and Qazi Qazan was made Qazi of Thatta.²

In his poetry, one comes across two distinct strands. On the one hand, like most Sindhi poets, he was a believer in *Wahdat-al-wujud*. On the other, he was greatly inspired by the Mahdavi movement of Sayyid Muhammad Jaunpuri (India). When the latter visited Sind in 1489 to propagate his message, Qazi Qazan became his *murid*. Only seven of his verses have survived;* nevertheless they give some indication of the subtlety of his thoughts and his skill as a poet. Some complicated philosophical and Sufi ideas are hinted at with the help of similes and metaphors. One of his most popular verses is the following:

ڪنزِ قدوري، ڪافي، پڙهين/پڙهين سڀ
تہ ڪر منڊي ماڪوڙي ڪوہ ۾ پئي ڪڇي اُٺ

(Even) after reading all (the books) like *kanz*,³
*qaduri*⁵ and *kafiyo*,⁶ one will be like a lame ant in
a well, measuring the sky.⁷

1. Daudpoto U.M., 'Qazi Qazan Sehwanī', *Mehranjun Majnun*, ed. Rashidi Pir Husam al-Din, Karachi, 1956, pp. 171–175.
2. Sayyid G.M., *Paigham Latif*, Hyderabad Sind, 1953, pp. 18–19.
3. Cf. Sayyid, *op.cit.*, pp. 18–19; also Daudpoto, *op. cit.*, pp. 171–175.
4. A collection of the prophetic traditions.
5. A handbook of the Hanafi law.
6. A grammatical poem by Ibn Hajib.
7. Daudpoto, *op. cit.*, p. 175.

* Later edition consists of 116 baits, collected by Hiro Thakur, *Qazi Qazan Jo Kalam*, New Delhi, 1975.

It is clear from the above verse that the poet considered bookish or worldly knowledge to be unimportant and inadequate. Though few of his verses have survived, Schimmel commenting on his work writes

'Qadi Qadan's name shows for the first time all the features which were to become so common in later Sindhi mystical poetry; they combine extreme density with a joy in puns, word-plays and alliterations. Since every word in Sindhi ends in a vowel, the sound is very musical. Sindhi grammar with its amazing wealth of grammatical forms and its rich verbal structure allows the poet to put the words together in a most intricate form.'

Other important poets include Makhdum Nuh of Hala (d.1590) of the Suhrawardiyya order, whose *mafuza*t (collection of sayings) is in Persian, with only two of his verses in the Sindhi language. He translated the Qur'an into Persian and was on good terms with rulers and high officials.²

Mention should also be made of Sayyid Abd al-Karim of Bulri (1538-1623), the great grandfather of Shah Abd al-Latif. He was born in Muta'alvi and later settled in Bulri. His work in Persian entitled *Bayan al-Arifin* includes 93 baits in Sindhi. In these couplets the poet draws on Sindhi folk tales, such as the themes of Sasui and Punhu, Umar and Marui, Lila and Chanesar, Suhni and Mehar, Khahori and Moriro. The inspiration of the poetry is Sufi³ He was an Uwaisi Sufi⁴ who learned much from the company of great Sufis such as Makhdum Nuh and Yusuf

1. Schimmel, op.cit., p.12.
2. Badavi, op. cit., pp.74-76.
3. Mirza Qalech Beg, *Qadim Sind ja Sitara*, Shikarpur Sind, 1923, p.13. Also Baloch, N.A., *Miyen Shah Karim jo Kalam*, Hyderabad Sind, 1963, p.80.
4. Daudpoto U.M., *Shah Karim Bulri Warejo Kalam*, Bhitshah, 1977, pp.31-32. Some scholars believe him to have belonged to the Qadiriyya.

Bakhari. According to Badavi, the poet composed his work and expressed similar Sufi views to those of Bayazid Bistami and Junaid Baghdadi. His poetry is in the form of *doha* couplets in Hindi style.¹

It would appear appropriate to refer to some of the immediate literary predecessors and contemporaries of Shah Abd al-Latif so as to draw a picture of the cultural environment in Sind in which the poet grew up and from which he drew his inspiration. The names of many learned *Sufis*, *Makhdums*, *Pirs* and *Ulama*, are known but only the most significant of them will be mentioned in this short survey. Many of the great literary figures of Sind were of course linked to one or more of the four Sufi *tariqas* which had become popular in Sind, like Suhrawardiyya, Naqshbandiyya, Qadiriyya and Chishtiyya.²

Mention should be made first of Shah Lutf Allah Qadiri (c.1611–79). According to these approximate dates Shah Abd al-Latif was born ten years after his death. This important figure belonged to the Qadiriyya order and he attained the status of *murshid*. For the guidance of his followers he wrote books about his *tariqa*, three of which are known by name: *Tuhfat al-Salikin* and *Minhaj al-Marifat*, which were written in Persian and *Sindhi Risalo*. Only the two latter have survived.³

There are various areas of similarity with the work of Shah Abd al-Latif. *Minhaj al-Marifat* is written in Persian and contains only twenty Sindhi verses. In this work the writer uses the image of sailors embarking on a journey to symbolise the journey of the *salik* and the dangers he has to face in his quest for spirituality. He also uses *yogi* names such as Adesi, Sami and Kapari, referring to their habits and way of life, but in a Sufi context. Baloch sees

1. Badavi, op.cit., pp.92–94.

2. Sayyid, op. cit., pp.50–51; Subhan, A.J., *Sufism, its saints and shrines*, New York, 1970. Schimmel, A.M., *Pain and Grace*, Leiden, 1974, pp.20.24.

3. Baloch, Nabi Bukhsh, *Shah Lutf Allah Qadiri Kalam*, Hyderabad Sind, 1968, pp.9–12.

a possible link with Shah Abd al-Latif here and raises the suggestion that Shah Abd al-Latif had read the works of Shah Lutf Allah. Certainly the latter uses the same image of sailors in *Sur Srirag* and *Samundhi* and he writes about yogis in *Sur Khahori* and

Ramkali.¹

Shah Lutf Allah Qadiri is also significant in that he may well have been the first person who wrote a whole book (his *Risalo*) in Sindhi, whereas his contemporaries generally wrote in Arabic or Persian. Shah Abd al-Latif seems to have followed the same tradition, but to have gone even further in that he composed his verses in no other language except Sindhi.

Unlike Shah Abd al-Latif, Qadiri does not draw on the wealth of Sindhi folk-tales for his inspiration.

Turning now to Shah Inayat Rizvi of Nasarpur (1622-1712) it is sufficient to point out that he was a prominent Sufi poet of the Qadiriyya whom Shah Abd al-Latif used to visit and with whom the latter would discuss poetry and Sufism.² Shah Inayat Rizvi is an interesting contact for Shah Abd al-Latif. The former uses local Sindhi folk stories in his poetry, following on the tradition of Shah Abd al-Karim and he also employs evocative yogi names such as Kapari, Adesi, Sannyasi as Lutf Allah Qadiri had done before him.³

A very important influence was exerted on Shah Abd al-Latif by Shah Inayat Sufi of Jhoke (d.1721 A.D.). He was *murid* to Makhdum Abd al-Malik Burhanpuri of the Qadiriyya, who was a descendant of Shaikh Abd al-Qadir Gilani. Shah Abd al Latif used to visit him, and was greatly impressed by him. Thousands flocked to him and the religious authorities considering him a threat,

1. Baloch, N.A., op. cit., pp.22-3.

2. Baloch, N.A., *Miyen Shah Inayat jo Kalam*, Hyderabad Sind, 1963, pp.22,34,38,40; cf. also Maimun Abd al-Majid, *Jotiyun Jawahiranjun*, Larkana, 1971, p.36.

3. Baloch, op. cit., p.41.

trumped up charges of heresy against him. He was eventually branded as a heretic and put to death in 1718.¹

This event had a profound effect on the life and thought of Shah Abd al-Latif. To commemorate this man's death, he composed some melancholy verses.² Although the name of Shah Inayat Sufi is not explicitly mentioned, it has been suggested that he is referring to that event:—

اَڄ نه اوطاڻن ۾، طالب توارين،
آديسي اُتي وٺا، مَرَّهيُون مُون مارين،
هُو جي جي جِي جيارين، سي لاهوئي لڏي وٺا.

The voice of the God-seekers is heard no more in
the sitting room.

The Adesis have left, and the emptiness of the
place is killing me.

Those who used to give bliss to life have departed.³

Seven verses in *Sur Ramkali* are said to have written commemorating the death of Shah Inayat Sufi.

The latter also apparently wrote poetry in Persian and Sindhi but very little of his work has survived. A part of a Persian couplet of his was used by Shah Abd al-Latif. The Persian original is as follows:—⁴

1. Mirza Qalech Beg, *Qadim Sindja Sitara*, Hyderabad Sind, 1923, pp.14–5.
Contrary to the above information, It is argued that Shah could not have possibly visited Sufi Inayat, because according to some sources Sayyids of Bulri, close relatives of Shah were responsible for Sufi Shah Inayat's death. cf. also Wafai Din Muhammad, *Lutf al-Latif*, Karachi, 1951, pp.70–1.
2. Sayyid, op. cit., pp.59–63.
3. Shahvani, op. cit., pp.1159.
A. Schimmel, 'Shah Inayat of Jhoke,' *Liber Amicorum*, Leiden 1963.
4. Badavi, op. cit., p.266.

سر در قدم یار فدا شد چه بجا شد
این بار گران بود ادا شد چه بجا شد

Shah Abd al-Latif uses this line with reference to Suhni:-

گهڑی گهڑو هتِ کری، بهونِ نہاری ہنگ،
سر در قدم یار فدا شد چه بجا شد وصلِ اہوئی ونگ
راتِ جنین جو رنگ، آلا! او اُکارین.

With the jar in hand, after looking at the curves
(of the river) she entered)

The life sacrificed at the feet of the beloved is
in order.

This is the custom of union.

For whom when night is the blessing,
O God! help them to cross.¹

Sufi Inayat's death was mourned not only by Muslims but by Hindus as well, and elegies on him were written by both Muslim and Hindu poets.²

Makhdum Muhammad Mu'in Thattavi was also an important figure in the lifetime of Shah Abd al-Latif. His exact dates are not known but he was born in the late seventeenth century. He was a Naqshbandi Sufi who became a close friend of Shah Abd al-Latif, on whose advice he wrote a work in Persian entitled *Risala-yi Uwaisiyya*. In this work, the writer gives guidance on the Sufi path for those Sufis who are not attached to a Sufi master. Muhammad Mu'in Thattavi was criticised for his liking for music and also for his shi'ite beliefs.³

1. Shahwani, op. cit., p. 287.

2. Schimmel, *Pain and Grace*, pp.21-22.

3. Alavi, Shafii Ahmed, 'Shah Abd al-Latif jaba Hamasr al-Arif', in *Nain Zindagi*, December 1951, p. 17; Schimmel, op.cit., p.22; Wafai, op. cit., p.76.

Another significant contemporary of Shah Abd al-Latif was Makhdum Muhammad Hashim Thattavi (1692–1761). He was a strong upholder of orthodox Islam and enjoyed a good relationship with the Kalhoro ruler, Ghulam Shah. He became chief *qazi* of Thatta. He was a prolific writer of works on religion and law, in Arabic, Persian and Sindhi. It seems that Shah Abd al-Latif met Muhammad Hashim on a few occasions but with their widely diverging views a friendship did not develop.¹

Of much less rigid beliefs was Makhdum Muhammad Zaman of Lanwari (1713–1774), a follower of the Naqshbandiyya. Although a learned man who strictly observed the *Sharia*, he was not narrow-minded. His 84 verses in Sindhi which have survived reveal great depths of religious feeling.² Shah Abd al-Latif visited him and was immensely impressed by his knowledge.³

Lastly in this brief survey of important literary figures in the time of Shah Abd al-Latif, mention should be made of Sahib dino Faruqi (1697–1788). A member of the Suhrawardiyya, he was a poet in his own right, as well as being famous as the grandfather of Sachal Sarmast. His poetry deals mostly with Sufi themes and draws on Sindhi folk stories as Shah Abd al-Latif was to do a little later.⁴

1. Shimmel, A.M. *Pain and Grace*, p.22; Sayyid, op.cit., pp.71–3; Badavi, op. cit., pp.253–5.

2. Sayyid, op. cit., pp. 73–5.

3. Schimmel, A.M., *Sindhi Literature*, Wiesbaden, 1974, p.20; Advani, op. cit., p. 66.

4. Maimun, Abd al-Majid, *Jotiyun Jawahiran jun*, Larkana, 1971, p.36.

PART 2

THE LIFE OF SHAH ABD AL-LATIF

Shah Abd al-Latif was born in 1102/1689–1690 in the village of Hala Hawaili in the Hyderabad district of Sind. Soon after his birth Shah Habib, his father, left Hala Hawaili for unknown reasons and settled in another village Kotri (now in ruins) near present Bhit Shah.¹

His family traced their origin to the prophet Muhammad. His ancestors lived in Herat, and in 1398, when Timur conquered Herat, the conqueror employed Sayyid Mir Ali, one of the ancestors of Shah Abd al-Latif, as well as his six sons, in his service, making all save one of them rulers of different states of India.² The last son, Sayyid Haidar Shah, stayed with his father in the service of Timur. When they came to India Sayyid Haidar Shah sought his father's permission and went to see His brothers. he visited different parts of India and during his travels he came to the town of Hala in Sind and became the guest of a well-known person, Shah Muhammad of Halla, who provided the traditional hospitality of Sind. In return, Sayyid Haidar Shah helped his host in various ways. As a result of this friendship, Shah Muhammad offered him the hand of his daughter in marriage.³

Thus Sayyid Haidar Shah married and settled in Halkendi, now called Hala (Sind). Three years and eight months later, he received the news of his father's death. Therefore he left for Herat and soon after died there. His wife, who was pregnant when he left, gave birth to a boy, whom she named after his grandfather

1. Gurbukhshani, H.M., *Shah jo-Risalo*, Hyderabad Sind, 1979, vol.I, p.9.
2. According to some scholars, the above information is considered to be a legend.
3. Ibid., p.7.

Mir Ali; the boy settled permanently in Sind.¹ His descendants became known as the Sayyids of Muta'alvi or Matyari.² These Sayyids traced their ancestry to Imam Musa Kazim's son, Ja'far Sani al-Hujwiri. Shah Abd al-Latif belonged to this family, which has produced a number of learned and religious people, and who were greatly respected in Sind.

Mention has already been made of his great grandfather, Shah Abd al-Karim of Bulri (1537-1620 AD), the great Sufi poet whose tomb is still visited with reverence by his followers and devotees at Bulri.³

Shah Abd al-Latif's father, Habib Shah, was also a religious person and poet in his own right. He had many disciples or *murids*. His genealogical table given below will show the line of Shah Abd al-Latif ascending to the prophet Muhammad. The source of this *Shajar nama* or family tree is the well-known scholar of Sind, Mirza Qalech Beg, in his book, *Ahwal Shah Abd al-Latif Bhitai*.⁴

About the childhood of Shah Abd al-Latif very little is known. The biographies written in the east about saints, Sufis, poets and great personalities are mostly so confused and intermingled with legends that they create great problems for the researcher in selecting facts from fiction or legends.

According to his biographers and commentators like Gurbukhshani Hotchand and others, Shah Abd al-Latif used to be mostly quiet and very sober as a child. Unlike most others of his age, he loved solitude, and would wander alone in the forest. Thus nature became his companion and a great teacher. He enjoyed the beautiful sights and objects of nature. He loved to listen

1. Shahvani, G.M., *Shah Jo Risalo*, Hyderabad Sind, 1950, p.2.
2. Sayyid, G.M., *Paigham Latif*, Hyderabad Sind, 1953, p.3.
3. Sayyid, op. cit., p.5. Cf. p.11, of this thesis, Cf. Daudpoto, U.M., *Shah Karim Bulri Ware jo Kalam*, Bhit Shah, 1977, p.32.
4. Mirza Qalech Beg, *Ahwal Shah Abdal-Latif Bhitai*, Hyderabad Sind, 1972, Appendix Alif, p.177.

to the sweet songs of birds and took inspiration from their selfless devotion to their kind. His deep appreciation of the beauty of nature may of course be glimpsed in his classical work, *Risalo*, which he composed later in life.¹

Hashim
Abd al-Muttalib

Abd Allah
Prophet Muhammad
Hazrat Fatima.

Abu Talib
Ali Murtaza

Imam Hussain
Imam Zain al Abidin
Imam Muhammad Baqir
Imam Ja'far Sadiq
Imam Musa Kazim
Imam Zada Iraqi
Sayyid Ja'far Shah
Sayyid Husain al-Akbari Shirazi
Sayyid Ali Javari (Havari)
Sayyid Ibrahim Shah
Sayyid Hussain Shah Shirazi
Sayyid Yusuf Shah
Sayyid Ali
Sayyid Hussain Shah Tirmizi
Sayyid Muhammad Shah Shirazi
Sayyid Mir Ali Shah Herati
Sayyid Haidar Shah
Sayyid Mir Ali Shah
Sayyid Sharaf al-din
Sayyid Jalal Muhammad Shah
Sayyid Hajji Shah
Sayyid Hashim Shah
Sayyid Abd al-Mu'min Shah
Sayyid Lal Shah
Sayyid Abd al-Karim Shah
Sayyid Jamal Shah

¹ Gurbukhshani, op. cit., p.9 C f. also Tirathdas Hotchand, *Shah Abd al-Latif*, Hyderabad, 1962, p.16.

Sayyid Abd al-Qudus Shah
 Sayyid Habib Shah
 Sayyid Abd al-Latif Shah¹

Gurbukhshani² cites stories which grew up around the childhood of the poet and which suggest that he possessed or was guided by a supernatural power from an early age. Instead of playing, he used to preach and explain to other children some religious and Sufi maxims or truths. At times he was overcome by ecstasy or *hal*. He also used to perform miracles and show them to his friends.

There is no proof that Shah Abd al-Latif had regular academic training, nor has his handwriting been found anywhere. But it would appear that he did receive some education, as Akhund Nur Muhammad Bhatti is mentioned as his tutor by scholars like Shahvani, Gurbukhshani, Advani, and others.³ These scholars assert that when Shah Abd al-Latif was about five or six years old, his father Shah Habib sent him to Akhund Nur Muhammad Bhatti for tuition. When the latter asked the child to say Alif – A – the first letter of the alphabet, he repeated it. But he refused to say Be – or B – the second letter, saying that there is no Be. His teacher took him to his father, who understood what his son meant, and was very pleased with him. (Alif stands for Allah, which meant that as a child he was well aware that there was only one God.)* Shah Habib told him that he was right, but that for worldly affairs one had to attain a practical education as well.

Argument has been waged as to whether Shah Abd al-Latif could even read and write. The historian and scholar, Mir Ali Sher

1. This *Shajar nama* (family tree) is based on the appendix of Mirza Qalech Beg. cf. Mirza Qalech Beg, *Ahwal Shah Abd al-Latif*, Hyderabad Sind, 1972, p.177.

2. Gurbukhshani, op. cit., pp.16–17.

3. Shahvani, op. cit., pp.4–5. Gurbukhshani, op. cit., pp.16–17. Advani, K., *Shah jo-Risalo*, Karachi, 1976, p.3.

* This is of course a quality attributed to many sufis all over the Islamic world.

Qānī' Thattavi, in his book *Tuhfat al-Kiram*,¹ calls him *ummi*, meaning illiterate**. He writes that, in spite of the fact that the poet was *ummi*, all knowledge had been inscribed on his chest by God.

The German scholar, Ernest Trumpp,² who published *Shah jo-Risalo* in 1866, says in his introduction that the accusation that Shah Abd al-Latif was uneducated may be rejected immediately by one proof, namely his *Risalo*. In his *Risalo* he uses Arabic, Persian and Sindhi proverbs, phrases and sayings of intricate and deep meanings, which only a learned person could use so artistically. Shahvani affirms Ernest Trumpp's view about Shah Abd al-Latif's education. He says that his *Risalo* proves that he knew Arabic well and he even quotes phrases from the Qur'an and Tradition in his poetry. He seems to have been inspired by the *Masnavi* of Maulana Rumi, Vedantic philosophy and the *Risalo* of Shah Karim, who was his great grandfather. If he had not been educated, he would not have taken these books with him on his travels. Shahvani refers to the incident in which Nur Muhammad Kalhoro, the ruler of Sind, once presented a manuscript of *Masnavi* (written in golden letters) to Shah Abd al-Latif. If he had been *ummi* – illiterate – such a valuable gift would not have been given to him.³

Trumpp's views are shared by Gurbukhshani.⁴ Jotvani also comments on Shah Abd al-Latif's education. He writes that Akhund Nur Muhammad Bhatti of Vai village taught Shah Abd al-Latif 'who rose to be a learned man of his times – a man having complete mastery over his mother tongue Sindhi and a good knowledge of Arabic, Persian, Hindi and other languages of his time and clime. The *Risalo* unmistakably shows that he had studied the Qur'an and the Traditions, Sufism and Vedantism, partly due to his academic training befitting a scion of the Sayyids

1. Qani' Mir, Ali Sher, *Tuhfat al-Kiram*, trans. Ahmed Mir Makhdum, Hyderabad Sind, 1957, p.388.
2. Trumpp, Ernest, *Shah jo-Risalo*, Leipzig, 1866, p.vii.
3. Shahvani, op. cit., p.4.
4. Gurbukhshani, op. cit., p.10.

** This is again a topos.

and partly due to his personal observation of life in the company of Jogis and Sanyasis in his young age'.¹

The same writer explains that Mir Ali Sher Qani Thattavi was an admirer of Shah Abd al-Latif, and that he called the latter *ummi* out of devotion in order to bring him closer to the prophet Muhammad, and also to show that he was a divinely-guided saint who received revelation from God.

In any case, the word *ummi*, according to M. Ajmal Khan,² has been wrongly interpreted as 'illiterate' by almost all the commentators of the Qur'an. This word is the opposite of *ahl al-Kitab* – namely, people who possess the Law given by God. The Prophet did not know the Law of God before the revelation of the Qur'an. Moreover, the Jews referred to him as *ummi*, meaning that he was not conversant with the Old Testament and the Bible. There are several instances where the Prophet is referred to as *ummi*.

Few details are known about the youth of Shah Abd al-Latif. What appears certain is that at the age of twenty, he fell in love with a beautiful girl, who was the daughter of Mirza Mughal Beg. This man happened to be an influential person, belonging to an aristocratic family of Arghuns, who traced their ancestry back to Chengiz Khan.³

Mirza Mughal Beg was a disciple or murid of Habib Shah, the father of Shah Abd al-Latif. From generation to generation their family had been reputed for saintly persons and Sufis and supernatural powers were ascribed to them. On one occasion the daughter of Mirza Mughal Beg fell ill, and according to custom, the family invited Habib Shah to their ladies' apartment to bless

1. Jotvani, M., *Shah Abd al-Latif*, Delhi 1975, p.21.

2. Khan, M. Ajmal, 'An Enquiry into Earliest Collection of the Qur'an', *Studies in Islam*, 1964, Vol.1, pp.175–212.

3. One of his ancestors, Shah Beg of the Arghun dynasty of Afghanistan, had attacked Sind under the rule of the last Samma ruler, Jam Firuz, in the year 926/1519 AD, defeated the Jam and became ruler of Sind. Gurbukhshani, op. cit., p.11

the girl. As Shah Habib himself was ill, he sent his son Shah Abd al-Latif to perform the blessing. As soon as he saw the girl, he became aware of her apparent and inner beauty, and fell in love with her. To bless her he held the girl's little finger and exclaimed: 'One whose finger is clasped by the Sayyid's hand shall witness no harm'.¹ This infuriated the parents of the girl, who took it as an insult, and they made life difficult for Shah Abd al-Latif and his family. Finally, the Sayyid family had to leave Kotri and settle somewhere else away from the Arghuns.

From the time Shah Abd al-Latif saw the girl, he was quietly suffering the pangs of separation. When he could no longer conceal his emotions for the girl, his thoughts and feelings of agony took the form of verses which he uttered everywhere and all the time. These verses which were full of pathos, tribulation and sorrow, further enraged the Arghuns, who became his enemies.

It is said that once, while Shah Abd al-Latif was sitting on a sand dune immersed in deep thoughts, he lost consciousness and lay there for three days, becoming almost buried in the sand, with only a small corner of his clothes visible. A shepherd saw him and reported it to his father who was desperately worried about his son's absence. Shah Habib came to the spot, thinking that his son must have died by then, and he uttered a verse, 'The wind has blown and buried the limbs'. Suddenly, Shah Abd al-Latif gained his senses and replied in a melancholy tone: 'I still survive in the hope of meeting the beloved'.² This story is mentioned by well-known scholars such as Gurbukhshani, Mirza Qalech Beg, Advani and others. Such anecdotes as these must have become exaggerated in the course of time. But there is no doubt about the fact that Shah Abd al-Latif suffered enormous torments in separation from his beloved, who later became his wife.

All the good advice of his family and friends could not make him forget the girl.³ Nor could the hostile attitude of the girl's

1. Advani, op. cit., p. 14.

2. Gurbukhshani, op. cit., pp. 12-13.

3. Gurbukhshani, op. cit., p. 12.

family stop his flow of thoughts, resulting in heart-breaking poetry, either on separation or in praise of the beloved. As he says:

چیتاریان چٲکن، سنیاریان سٲھی،
آندر رُوح رَھی، مُنکی صُورت سٲرین جی

Whenever I recall their memory, the wounds
re-open and bleed.
I have been thinking about them continually.
The features of my sweetheart are ever present
in my heart:¹

When he was under pressure either to forget the girl, or not to mention his love, he expressed his feelings in poetry:

پَل پَل مِ پَلیانس، پَل تہ رَھی پَرین رِی،
جَنہن جہوریء کان جَہلیانس، جَہچیو تِن جہوریء پُوی۔

Every moment I have been prohibiting it (heart).
But it cannot stop thinking about the beloved,
even for a single second.
The more restrictions I impose, the more heartache
is tearing the wounds apart:²

All his efforts and those of his family failed to influence the opinion of the girl's parents. Moreover, the Arghuns made life difficult for him and his family. He realised that the man-made laws of the society were so strong and rigid that he could neither alter them nor break them. As a frustrated lover he had no choice but to leave the place.

1. Shahvani, op. cit., pp.1039-40.

2.

Though he abandoned everything and left, he was determined that sooner or later he would succeed in winning over his lady love. The following verse seems to express his feelings of that time. He says:

اَوَّلِ اَخرِ آه، هَلْ مُنْهِنِجُو هَوَتَ دِي،
پورِھُو سَندو پورِھِيتن والي! کي مَوجاءِ
سو مَوْن تورو لاءِ جِنءِ جِئري مِلان جَتَ کي.

Whether it is now, or after, my striving is for
and towards the beloved.

O my God! Do not undo the toil of the labourer.
Do me one favour, to see the beloved in my
lifetime.¹

While Shah Abd al-Latif was travelling alone, he never felt kithless or lonely. The love and sorrows of the beloved occupied the emptiness of the environment and his thoughts. He says:

سوَرَن لَدُو سَجھُ، پاٹھ پيھي آئيا
کي دَيان مَنجھُ؟ مَرُ تان چَکن چَتَ مَ!

Sorrows took their opportunity and came (to me)
by themselves

To whom could I disclose the secret?
Let the wounds (of sorrow) bleed within!²

Shah Abd al-Latif does not discourage sorrows; indeed, he considers them as his friends and requests them to stay with him. He says:

سوَر! مَوجيچاھُ، سچن جينءِ سانگِ وئا
پريءِ پچاٹا ائون ان سين اوريان!

1. Ibid., p.377.

2. 'Gurbukhshani, op. cit., p.362.

(Pain) Sorrows! pray do not leave me as the
beloved has done.

After the beloved I may converse with you.¹

After some time had elapsed, it seems that he felt his sorrows
might leave him too.

In the *Risalo* one finds the poet pleading with his sorrows
not to desert him until he is united with his beloved.

سور! مَرَمَجِ ساءِ آئون نہ وڪَنيِ آهيان
دَجِجِ مَرويل ڪِهين، وِره! مون وٽاءِ
تون پڻ تنهن جاءِ جڏه تيان هيڪاندي هوت سين!

O sorrows! do not deprive me of your savour.

For I am not yet satisfied.

Pray, do not leave me, O anguish! even for a
moment.

You can withdraw when I am unified with my
beloved.²

Shah Abd al-Latif seems to have enjoyed the company of
sorrows; he expresses it in the following words:

مُٺان، تان زانڊ، ڪِلان تان ڪامي هيون،
اَڪڙيون ويسانڊ، پريءَ گڏجي ڪنديون!

The (act of) crying gives me recreation (solace)

Laughter burns my heart

My eyes will only rest by meeting the beloved.³

1. Gurbukhshani, op. cit., p.362.

2. Ibid., p.362.

3. Ibid., p.368.

During his wanderings he must have passed through the lonely places among woods and deserts. But these things do not deter him from giving up his objective. He seems prepared for every obstacle on the way. Nevertheless, his description of the environment indicates his feelings.

وَدَا وَنَّ وَطَّكَارَ جَا، جِتِ نَانِگِ سُجَّهِنِ نِيلا
 اُتِي عَبْدِاللطيفِ چِي، كِنَا هِيڪَلِينِ حِيلا
 جِتِ كُتْمِ نِه قَبِيلا، اَتِ رَسَجِ، رَهْبِر! رَاهِمِ ۞!

Where there are huge trees in the forest, poisonous
 blue snakes are bound to be found there.
 There, says Abd al-Latif, is the solitude one is
 searching for.
 Where no assistance is sight from kinsmen or
 community.
 Help me, o guide! and direct me to the path.¹

From the poetry of Shah Abd al-Latif one can trace the places he visited and the type of people he met. His observations of his surroundings and the lessons he learns from a study of nature, and the hardships of the journey provide him with abundant raw material for his poetry. All the experience he has during his travels, and the lasting impressions they leave on his mind, he expresses through various *surs* of the *Risalo*.

According to Shahvani,² after leaving home Shah Abd al-Latif must have passed by on the Hala road (Shahi Sarak), travelling towards Hyderabad. Here he seems to have met yogis of various kinds, who used to meet there near Ganjo Takkar, at the temple of the goddess Kali.³ Shah Abd al-Latif joined the company of the yogis. He spent three years in their company and visited several places of pilgrimage, sacred to the Hindus.

1. Gurbukhshani, op. cit., p.267.

2. Shahvani, op. cit., p.8.

3. For further information, cf. Chapter 3 of this thesis.

During his travels he must have suffered a great deal in the rough, tiring mountainous regions and long stretches of dry desert. All these experiences he later expresses in his poetry.

While travelling from Las Belo he must have thought about Sapar Samma, ruler of Sind, who was well-known for his generosity. Shah Abd al-Latif pays tribute to him in the following words:

ٻاجهاڻون ٻيلي ڏٺي، ٻجھان ٻاجھ ٿئي،
سڀڙ سا سُئي، جيڪا چارڻ ڇٽ م.

The benevolent Lord of the Bela, from his sympathetic nature understood the matter.

Sapar attentively comprehended the intentions of the minstrel.¹

Shah Abd al-Latif never wrote in praise of kings, or to gain court patronage. In this case he appreciated the quality of generosity in a ruler who had died long before.

On the way he must have come across the Hellaya hills and Kinjhar Lake, and the ruins of a palace overlooking the lake. This palace had associations with a love story of Nuri and Jam Tamachi,² a Samma ruler of Sind. Shah Abd al-Latif refers to them in the following words:

هيٺ جرُ مٽي مَجرُ، پاسي پرين سَندامِ
ڪوڙين ڪاڇ سَدامِ اُن سَڌو ڪو نه رهيو

Below is the water, on it the blossom of an
acacia tree
By my side is my beloved
Numerous wishes of mine have been fulfilled

1. Shahvani, op. cit., p.1229.

2. Refer to Appendix for the folk story of Nuri and Jam Tamachi.

None is left unfulfilled.¹

هيٺ جرُ مٽي ميجر، ڪنڌيءَ ڪونرَ تَرَن،
وَرِيئي واهونڌَن، ڪنجهر ڪٿوري ٿئي.

Below is the water, above is the blossom of an
acacia tree
On the bank float waterlilies
At the time of spring, Kinjhar is full of sweet
fragrance.²

On his way towards Karachi, he seems to have visited the city of Bhambhore. The city, which is in ruins now, was associated with a romantic folk-story of Sasui and Punhu.³ Five *surs* (out of thirty) are devoted to this story in the *Risalo*. One may assume that it is because this story has points of similarity with the life of Shah Abd al-Latif himself that he composed a large number of verses on it. The poet, like Sasui, the heroine of the story, was frustrated and searching for the beloved. Both had to face the long, tiring journey through the mountains and deserts, but never gave up. In one of the verses he addresses Sasui saying:

وہ مَر مُنڌا! پَنپورَ ۾، ڪَر ڪو واڪو وَسُ
ليڙَن جو لطيفُ چي، ڏنگرَ ڏيندَ ڏَسُ
پُنهُون اُٿي پَسُ، سِرَ پَرهلي سُسُئي!

Never sit, woman, in Bhambhore, call out and
embark on the task.
The mountains, says Latif, will inform you about
the camels. Sasui, go and seek Punhu, even if

1. Shahvani, op. cit., p.867.

2. Ibid.

3. Wafai, op. cit., pp.56–57. For a detailed account of this Sindhi folk story, cf. Appendix.

you have to walk on your head.¹

The poet passed by Karachi, which at that time was only a small fishing village called Kalachi. One folk-story is still associated with Kalachi – the whirl-pool which drowned the six brothers of Moriro. Shah Abd al-Latif is not unaware of this incident, and composes a *sur, Ghatu*, about it.²

ڪال ڪلاچيءَ وٽا، ڇٽيون ڪٽي ڇڳير
پاڻرن پيرو نه ڪيو، آڏن ڪئي اوير
اهڙي خاصي ڪير، ڪن ورائي جهلي

Yesterday, the brave ones went to Kalachi,
carrying spears and spikes. The brothers
did not return alas! the kinsmen have
been delayed. The whole group have been
caught up in the whirlpool.³

Then Shah Abd al-Latif seems to have crossed the Hab river. In order to reach the valley of Windur, he had to cross the dry, rocky deserted areas, before he could reach the Haro mountains. Shah Abd al-Latif may well be referring to these mountains when he puts the following words into the mouth of Sasui. He says:

رائي ڪي رنجور، ٽڪر توءِ ٽاڪيو چڙهي
لانيجي لڪ، لطيف ڇي، هلي ڏانهن حضور
رهيا سڀ رڳن ۾، سسئيءَ جا سالور
ساڄن ميٽيس سور، سُڪ نه ميٽيس سپرين.

Sasui has been tortured and hurt by the journey
through the mountains

1. Shahwani, op. cit., p.382/14.
2. Cf. the Appendix for the details of this story.
3. Shahwani, op. cit., p.876.

In spite of that, says Latif, she is proceeding
towards 'the presence.'¹

The deserts have deprived Sasui of her adornment
and silken dresses.

Through sorrows and not through an easy life has
she attained her beloved.²

After crossing the Haro mountains the poet, along with his yogi companions, reached Hinglaj. Then he visited Lahut which is in the vicinity of the Pab mountain: he went there by way of Vankar. Thereafter he crossed the river Indus at Thatta and visited Mughal-bin, then Lakhpat in Kacch, Duwarka and Purab-Bandar.² In remembrance of these places Shah Abd al-Latif composed *Sur Samundhi* and *Sur Sri Rag*.

His visit to Jhunagarh and Gimar Hill reminded him of the folk story of Sorath Rai Diyach³ and his unbelievable love of music, and generosity in paying the minstrel with his own head. The poet pays him tribute in the following words:

ڪي جو بيجل ٻو لئو، پنيءَ ويهي ڀان
راجا رتولن ۾ سڀاڻو سلطان
آءُ مٿاهون، مڱڻا! مقابل ميدان
گهوريان لک لطيف چي، تنهنجي قدم تان گربان
مٿو هيءُ، مڙمان! هلي آءُ ته هٿ ڏينءُ

At the break of the dawn, the minstrel Bijal
started singing

His song fascinated the Raja to such an extent,
that he called the minstrel.

1. An honorific title of the beloved.
2. Advani, op. cit., p.143.
3. Advani, K.B., *Shah Latif*, New Delhi, 1970, pp.15-17.

Saying, come in front of me so that I can sacrifice
thousands of thousands (money) at your
feet. Said Latif.

O my guest! (said Raja), come so that I may present
you my head.¹

From *Sur Marui*,² it is clear that Shah Abd al-Latif not only visited Thar and Malir himself but he also uses numerous Thari words. He also mentions the food people ate there and the kind of life they lived. Marui's love for Malir and Maru is proverbial in Sind. This *sur* is one of the longest in the Risalo. The poet writes:

واجهائي وطنَ کي، ساري ڏيان ساهُ
هيءُ سرُ ساڙيَهَ سامهون، منهنجو نچ، ميان!
مقاميائي مارئين، وڃي ٿر ٿيان!
مياڻي جيان، جي وڃي مرهه ملير ڏي.

If I die here, longing for my country
O sir! take my body to my homeland
So that at least my dead body may rest in Thar,
in the same graveyard.
I will live again, if only my corpse is taken to
Malir.³

Shah Abd al-Latif also went to Jaisalmir and neighbouring places. He even saw Landano, where another heroine, Mumal,⁴ had her palace overlooking the river Kak. Here he must have visualised Mumal waiting for Rano, and requesting him for forgiveness. As he says:

1. Shahvani, op. cit., pp.899-900.
2. Refer to the folk story in the Appendix.
3. Shahvani, op. cit., p.801.
4. Cf. the Appendix for the story.

رُسَ مَ، رُسَن گھوړئو، چِڌَ، راڻا! ريډائي
 مُنهنجي مٽ، مَڍرا! عاقل! اڳلائي
 لپيٽج، لطيف چي، ڪامل ڪچائي
 ڪر معاف مڏائي، تہ سودا! سُڪيائي ٿيان.

O Rana! do not be annoyed with me, do give up.
 anger.

Maindra!▲ and wise one! overlook my foolishness

O perfect! says Latif, conceal my faults.

Forgive my vices, O Sodha!~ so that I can be at
 peace.¹

It was Shah Abd al-Latif's great wish to visit Karbala in Iraq and accordingly he set out as an old man to go there. On the way some of his disciples reminded him of his advice to them, 'to live and die in Bhit Shah'. Shah Abd al-Latif was moved by it, and not wanting to disappoint his followers, he went back to Bhit Shah. After giving up the idea of going to Karbala, he composed *Sur Kedaro*, in memory of the tragedy of Karbala.² In that sur he mourns the death of Imam Hussain, his family and friends. He praises their endurance and bravery in fighting with determination against very powerful and well-equipped forces. Though they were only a handful of people, they decided to fight against injustice, so as to leave an example for the rest of the world of how never to submit in the face of a cruel ruler and unfair government.

Turning now to individuals who may have exerted a spiritual influence on Shah Abd al-Latif, it would appear that in none of

1. Shahvani, op. cit., p.734.

2. Shahvani, op. cit., p.24.

▲Caste of Rana

** Name of a tribe, Rana belonged
 to this tribe.

his works does he mention his *murshid* or guide, nor do any subsequent scholars mention any name. But his poetry reveals that he was inspired by certain sufis, *ulama* and yogis. He also mentions on a couple of occasions the name of Maulana Rumi, whose works had a great effect on him.

In particular, it would appear that Madan Bhagat, and Tamar Faqir, who were Hindus, were his friends and it has been suggested that the friendship of Madan Bhagat caused Shah al-Latif to be attracted to yogis.¹ Apart from Hindu companions, the poet had many Muslim friends, especially amongst the *ulāma*'.

Shah Abd al-Latif was inspired by the works of certain saints whose tombs he would visit from time to time to gain spiritual enrichment. The most prominent among these were: Makhdum Nuh (1506–1593), Makhdum Bilawal (flourished in the sixteenth century) and Shah Abd al-Karim of Bulri (1538–1635), the poet's own great grandfather.

There were also many living holy men whom Shah Abd al-Latif visited and with whom he exchanged ideas. These included Shah Inayat Sufi of Jhok (died 1718), Makhdum Muhammad Mu'in Thattavi (died 1747), Makhdum Muhammad of Khuhra (died 1757), Makhdum Muhammad Zaman Lanvari (died 1770).

After three years' travelling, Shah Abd al-Latif returned home and was offered in marriage the same girl, Saida Begum, whose parents had formerly rejected him. By now most of the male members of her family had been killed by robbers, including her father. Since the rest of the family believed that a curse had been put on them for ill-treating the poet's family who were Sayyids, the women of the Arghun family were only too willing to give the hand of the girl to Shah Abd al-Latif. The marriage took place and the poet found that his wife possessed all the good qualities he had attributed to her in his poetry, though he had hardly known her before marriage. The relationship seems to have been a har-

1. Advani, op. cit., p.11.

monious one, although some scholars have refuted this.¹ According to Mirza Qalech Beg, for example, Shah Abd al-Latif never liked any women, even his wife, and he married merely in order to follow the *Sunna* of the Prophet Muhammad.² It is traditional to attribute a dislike of women to a great Sufi figure.³

Mirza Qalech Beg writes that Shah Abd al-Latif used to say:

The *talib* (seeker) should live a bachelor's life. When he marries, his condition becomes like a fly stuck in honey which cannot set itself free and fly. He (the seeker) will be stuck in the worldly life and all hopes of his spiritual flight will be hindered due to his involvement in family life.⁴

Such a statement sounds reasonable in a Sufi context but as will be discussed elsewhere in this thesis it does not adequately reflect the attitude of Shah Abd al-Latif to women.

After his marriage, the poet chose a sandhill (*bhit*) near the present town of Hala, far from habitation, in which to settle. Characteristically, he helped to build a village with his own hands along with his followers and then moved there. The popularity of Shah Abd al-Latif as a Sufi and a poet attracted numerous devotees, Hindus and Muslims alike, to the isolated *bhit*.⁵

Much has been written about the religious views of Shah Abd al-Latif. Like his forefathers, Shah Abd al-Latif was a Sunni Muslim who observed all the obligatory duties of the Shari'a.

1. Gurbukhshani, op. cit., p.16.
2. Mirza Qalech Beg, *Life of Shah Abdal-Latif of Bhit*, Hyderabad Sind, 1972, p.61.
3. Jotvani has also pointed out this trend regarding the Sufis.
4. Mirza Qalech Beg, op. cit., p.61.
5. Gurbukhshani, op. cit., p.19.

Nevertheless, he appears to have been sympathetic towards certain Shi'ite practices and beliefs. He had a great regard and love for Sayyids, especially the Prophet Muhammad, Hazrat Ali and the Imams Hasan and Husain. As already mentioned, one chapter of the *Risalo* is devoted to the tragedy of Karbala. In the month of Muharram, Shah Abd al-Latif used to wear the traditional black clothes of mourning in accordance with Shi'ite custom. On the other hand, he never abused or accused the first three Caliphs as the Shi'ites do. One possible reason for his partiality to the family of the Prophet could be that his own ancestors came from that line. Moreover, Shah Abd al-Latif always supported the oppressed classes. In this case, Yazid was the oppressor who tortured and massacred a handful of Sayyids and it would be natural for Shah Abd al-Latif to observe Muharram as a reminder to the people of injustice against which they should rise without fear.¹

Shah Abd al-Latif was once asked if he was a Sunni or Shi'ite? He answered 'in between'. When his questioner told him that there was nothing 'in between', Shah Abd al-Latif replied that he was that 'nothing'. In Sufi terms this refers to *fana* (nothingness or self-annihilation). Whether or not he was more Sunni or Shi'ite, what is clear is that his thoughts were inclined towards Sufism.

According to Wafai Din Muhammad, Sayyid and Mirza Qalech Beg, Shah Abd al-Latif belonged to the Qadiriyya Sufi Order, founded by Abd al-Qadir Gilani (1077–1166 AD), one of poet's own ancestors. Like many adherents of the Qadiriyya, Shah Abd al-Latif was greatly inspired by *wahdat al-wujud*,² the doctrine propounded by Ibn Arabi which spread throughout the Muslim world and which had gained great popularity in the sub-continent.

Although the majority view would appear to hold that Shah Abd al-Latif belonged to the Qadiriyya order, Advani argues that he was an Uwaisi Sufi.³ Whatever the truth may have been, it

1. Gurbukshanl, op. cit., p.26.

2. Wafai Din Muhammad, *Lutf al-Latif*, Karachi, 1951, p.142.

3. Op. Cit., p.11.

appears that Shah Abd al-Latif was open to influences from the three other Sufi orders which were popular in Sind; the Chishtiyya, the Suhrawardiyya and the Naqshbandiyya.

Music, which was very important in the ritual of the Chishtiyya order, also played a great part in the life of Shah Abd al-Latif.

Although Shah Abd al-Latif had a very broad outlook on religion, he did not refrain from performing formal religious acts. This he believed to be essential for the self-discipline of the individual believer. Moreover, as he had a large number of followers, who were mostly illiterate, he wished to show them how to conduct themselves from his own example.¹

Fundamentally, however, for Shah Abd al-Latif religion was a personal matter, which unless a man felt from within his heart, no matter how much he prostrated himself and held fasts in Ramadan, would be of little value. He expresses such views in his verses, saying:²

اِنْ پَر نہ ایمانُ، چنء کَلَمی گُو کونائین
دغا تَتَهجی دل ۾ شَرک ۽ شَیطانُ
مہ ۾ مُسلمانُ، اَنڈر اَڈر آھین.

It is not the true faith when you recite the name
of God. In your heart is deceit and Satan.
In appearance only you look Muslim. Inside you
is Azar.³

He puts great emphasis on purity of heart and right conduct, rather than outward performances. He says:

1. Gurbukhshani, op. cit., pp.27-28.

2. Shahvani, op. cit., p.1015/14.

3. This is probably a pun **آذر-آذر** the latter being the name of Abraham's father i.e. an infidel.

جانِ جانِ پَسِينِ پاڻ کي، تان تانِ ناهِ سُجودِ
وِجائي وُجودِ، تِهانِ پوءِ تَکْبِيرِ چوءِ

As long as you are conscious of your self
Prostration is of no use
First of all give up your existence
Then only can you voice the 'takbir'.¹

An integral part of the religious life of Shah Abd-al-Latif was his love of music and singing. He used to play the *yaktaro* and sing his own poetry. At times he used to spend several days in *sama'*. During that time he was unaware of his surroundings, and tears used to flow from his eyes. Many people used to come to listen to his divine message of love, unity and peace, irrespective of caste, colour or creed.²

His Muslim contemporaries did not approve of his practice of music. Once a group of mullas and learned men, including Makhdum Muhammad Hashim Thattavi, came to Shah Abd al-Latif and accused him of singing and playing music, which was an un-Islamic act. They argued that music was not permissible in any circumstances to a Muslim. Instead of arguing, he narrated a brief story to them. He said,

There is a tree, which is very useful for the well-being of the people, but there is a scarcity of water. Unless it receives water, it will wither away, causing great harm. But there is no water except a filthy pool: now would you suggest that we should let the tree wither away or pour some filthy water onto it to save it?

1. Shahvani, op. cit., p.992.

2. Mirza Qalech Beg, op. cit., pp.66-8. Also cf. Gurbukhshani, op. cit., p.25.

* Because God is indeed greater than all, even beyond men's existence.

** Throughout the centuries the 'Ulama' objected to the *sama* practised by the Sufis.

All of them agreed that they should save the tree with filthy water. Shah Abd al-Latif told them that in his heart was a tree of Divine Love, which was watered by listening to music. When the music stopped, it started to wither away. The delegation could not find any other point of argument, so they left disappointed.¹

LATER LIFE AND DEATH

After building the small village at Bhit, Shah Abd al-Latif left Kotri for ever and retired to that secluded place along with his family and faqirs (followers). Several masters of music and singers from different parts of India, including the well-known singers of Delhi, Chanchal and Attal, frequently visited him. Most of his time was spent in music and Sama'.

His fame as a holy man and great poet spread far and wide, numerous people from different parts of Sind and India flocked around him, either to obtain blessing or inspiration in spirituality.¹ His songs of love and peace for everyone irrespective of caste, colour or creed made him the unchallenged spiritual guide of Muslims and Hindus alike.

As mentioned already,² he intended to go to Karbala but was deflected from this by his followers. It is said that he spent 21 days in seclusion, after which he emerged, performed his ablutions, covered himself with a white sheet and asked the *faqirs* to play music. The music continued for three days. When his followers stopped it, they found him dead. This was 14th Safar 1167/ Tuesday, 11th December, 1753.

1. Mirza Qalech Beg, op. cit., p.67.

2. Gurbukhshani, op. cit., p.20.

3. Cf. p. 43.

THE WORK OF SHAH ABD AL-LATIF

INTRODUCTION:

Many influential figures in Sindhi literature wrote in the Kalhoro period (1658–1739) which was the most productive and truly decisive time for the development of Sindhi literature in all its branches. Towering, however, above dozens of well-known poets is the figure of Shah Abd al-Latif (1689–1752). His '*Risalo*' is 'a sacred book for the Sindhis, admired and memorised by Muslims and Hindus equally'.¹

According to Sorley 'He is incomparably the greatest man whom Sind has yet produced in the field of imaginative art'. Sorley goes on in similar laudatory tone:

He is the real jewel of the Kalhoro age. He has written poetry that deserves a wider public than it has yet attracted. His life is an epitome of the age in which he lived.²

1. Manuscripts.

There are thirty-one versions of *Shahjo-Risalo* in manuscript form, either in public or private libraries. There is considerable variation between the manuscripts. The number of *surs*, for instance, varies from a maximum number of 40 in one manuscript to a minimum of 17 *surs* in another. Moreover, the number of sections which each *sur* contains is also not uniform, nor is the order of the *surs* the same in all the manuscripts.³

1. Schimmel, *Sindhi Literature*, pp.13–14.

2. Sorley, H.T., *Shah Abdul Latif of Bhit*, London, 1940, p.169.

3. Junejo Abd Jabbar, *Latifiyyat*, Hyderabad Sind, 1977, pp.1–13.

It is not the aim of the ensuing discussion to deal at length with the complicated question of the manuscripts of the *Risalo*. Discussion will be limited merely to the two oldest manuscripts which are of particular interest and to the two manuscripts in Britain which have been seen by the writer of this thesis.

The manuscript generally regarded as the earliest is in the Institute of Sindology, University of Sind, Jamshoro. The second earliest manuscript, the so-called *Ganj*, is in Bhit Shah and is supposed to be more authentic. Of the other two mentioned below, one is kept in the British Museum¹ and the other one is in the India Office Library.²

The oldest manuscript, which dates from 1852, has 34 *surs* and 150 pages. It is named after Akhund Fazl Ali.³ According to this manuscript, the *surs* of the *Risalo* are as follows:

- (1) Kalyan (2) Jaman (Yaman) (3) Sarag (Sri Rag)
- (4) Samundhi (5) Sahni (Suhni) (6) Sarang (7) Kedaro
- (8) Abri (9) Ma'zuri (10) Daisi (11) Kohiyari
- (12) Husaini (13) Sorath (14) Berag Hindi
- (15) Berag Sindhi (16) Ranan (Rano) Mumal
- (17) Khahori (18) Ramkali (19) Ripp (20) Lila
- (21) Bilawal (22) Dahar (23) Kapa'iti (24) Asa
- (25) Maru'i (26) Dhanasiri (27) Kamod (28) Karayal
- (29) Pirbhati (30) Ghatu (31) Sheinh Kedaro .
- (32) Hir Ranjho (33) Purab (34) Dhol Maru'i.

This manuscript has four more *surs* than the now officially accepted number which is 30. Out of these 34 *surs*, six *surs* have names which are different from the ones used in the published editions of the *Risalo*, i.e. (1) *Berag Hindi*, (2) *Berag Sindhi*, (3) *Dhanasiri*, (4) *Sheinh Kedaro*, (5) *Hir Ranjho*, (6) *Dhol Maru'i*. As well as this difference, it is noteworthy that two *surs* of the *Risalo* are absent from the published version i.e. *Khambhat* and *Bravo Sindhi*.

1. *Shah Jo Risalo*, BM, Or. 2987.
2. *Shah Jo Risalo*, India Office, Sindhi ms., 3.145 FF.
3. Junejo, op. cit., p.1.

The second manuscript, the so-called *Ganj*, which dates from 1853, has 29 *surs* and 340 pages. In this manuscript 24 *surs* are the same as those found in present day published editions, but *Sur Kalyan* and *Yaman* are, however, combined and called *Kalyan* and *Jaman*. Out of the five usual *surs* on Sasui, there is only one in this MS. Apart from four *surs* about Sasui, *Bravo Sindhi* and *Sur Pirbhati*, which usually appear in published editions, are also missing. Instead, there are six other *surs*, i.e. *Sheinh Kedaro*, *Berag Hindi*, *Manj*, *Dhol Maru'i*, *Jajkani* and *Dhanasari*.

There is one manuscript of the *Risalo* in the British Museum.¹ It has twenty eight *surs* and consists of 284 pages. Nabi Bukhsh Baloch edited and published this manuscript² in 1969.

One of the manuscripts of the *Risalo* is in the India Office Library;³ it has 26 *surs* and in addition a *sur* of *Mutafarriq*, i.e. variant verses. This manuscript consists of 146 pages. Three *surs* are different from the edited *Risalo*, i.e. *Dhanasiri*, *Sheinh Kedaro* and *Basant*. *Sur Yaman Kalyan* is not included in it. Instead of five *surs* on Sasui i.e. *Abri*, *Mazuri*, *Desi*, *Kohiyari* and *Husaini*, there is only one *sur* under the name of Sasui. *Sur Lila Chanasar* is also not found in this ms., while the rest of the *surs* are the same as in the published *Risalo*.

The other two manuscripts under discussion, the one in the British Museum and the other in the India Office Library, have been personally consulted. On the other hand, information on the other two manuscripts has been obtained from *Latifiyyat*, a bibliography on Shah Abd al-Latif's work compiled by Junejo.⁴

Apart from these manuscripts, there are 14 definitive published editions of the *Risalo*, which purport to be complete.

1. Op. cit.

2. Baloch, Nabi Bukhsh, *Shah jo Risalo*, Hyderabad Sind, 1969.

3. Op. cit.

4. Junejo, Abd al-Jabbar, *Latifiyyat*, Hyderabad Sind, 1977, pp.1-13.

EDITIONS

The 14 different editions of the *Risalo* are as follows:

1. Advani, Kalyan, *Shah jo Risalo*, Bombay, 1958.¹
2. Bakhtiyarpuri, M. Ibrahim, *Shah Jo Risalo*, Sukkur, 1931.²
3. Baloch, Nabi Bukhsh, *Shah jo Risalo*, Hyderabad Sind, 1969.³
4. Baloch, Nabi Bukhsh, *Shah jo Risalo*, Bhitshah, 1974.⁴
5. Daipalai Muhammad Usman, *Shah jo Risalo*, Hyderabad Sind, 1951.⁵
6. Gurbukhshani, Hotchand Molchand, *Shah jo Risalo*, Volumes I, II and III, Karachi, 1923–31.⁶
7. Maimun Muhammad Siddiq, *Shah jo Risalo*, Hyderabad

1. This *Risalo* contains text, commentary or explanation of each verse, having an introduction to each *sur*. The assumed unauthentic poetry has been excluded. There is an abridged edition of the same *Risalo*, with the same number of *surs*, with an explanation and introduction to each *sur*. Advani, *Shah jo Risalo* (selection), Bombay, 1961.
2. Further information on this edition was not accessible to the author of this thesis.
3. This edition is based on the manuscript kept in the British Museum.
4. This is based on three manuscripts written in 1269–1270 A.H./1852–53.
5. It contains only the text, which includes also material generally regarded as unauthentic.
6. It has a long introduction and unauthentic material has been excluded. Each *sur* is prefaced by an introduction to the content, and interpretations of difficult words or phrases are given.

Sind, 1951.¹

8. Mirza Qalech Beg, *Shah jo Risalo*, Sukkur, 1913.²
 9. Qasimi Ghulam Mustafa, *Shah jo Risalo*, Volumes I and II, Karachi, 1951.³
 10. Qazi Imdad Ali, *Shah jo Risalo*, Hyderabad Sind, 1961.⁴
 11. Qazi Ibrahim, *Shah jo Risalo*, Bombay, 1867.⁵
 12. Shahvani, Ghulam Muhammad, *Shah jo Risalo*, Hyderabad Sind, 1950.⁶
 13. Tarachand Shoqiram, *Shah jo Risalo*, Bombay, 1900.⁷
 14. Trump, Ernest, *Shah jo Risalo*, Leipzig, 1866.⁸
1. No further information appears available on this edition and it was not accessible to the present author.
 2. It was reprinted in Hyderabad in 1923.
 3. It includes authentic as well as unauthentic material, and gives the meaning of difficult words.
 4. This is the first edition of the *Risalo* which does not contain *Sur Kedaro*. It contains the meanings of difficult words. The order of *surs* is also different from the usual *Risalo*; *Sur Suhni* is the last *sur*. There is no introduction to it.
 5. After this first edition, seven more reprints came out in 1876, 1889, 1893, 1911 and 1921. This is called the Bombay print (edition).
 6. It has an introduction, and the meaning of difficult words is given in the footnotes. Another print came out in 1961.
 7. This is called the 'official' edition. A reprint came out in 1923.
 8. This was the first edition of the *Risalo*. It has 22 *surs*, and an introduction in English. Trump uses his own modifications to the Arabic alphabet to indicate Sindhi sounds.

One of the reasons for the existence of so many editions of the *Risalo* was that different manuscripts were found in the possession of various people. Each differed from the other in certain aspects. Each scholar would consult one, two, three or more manuscripts and chose from them the material he thought was genuine. By judging the language and style, each one edited the *Risalo* in his own way.

The works of all the above-mentioned editors are in Sindhi. These works contain the original poetry of Shah Abd al-Latif in the form of *baits* and *vayun*, with an introduction, commentary and notes about the work.

Shah jo Risalo in its published form usually consists of thirty surs. These are:¹

- (1) Sur Kalyan (2) Sur Yaman Kalyan (3) Sur Khambhat (4) Sur Sri Rag (5) Sur Samundhi (6) Sur Suhni (7) Sur Sasui Abri (8) Sur M'azuri (9) Sur Desi (10) Sur Kohiyari (11) Sur Husaini (12) Sur Lila Chanesar (13) Sur Mumal Rano (14) Sur Sorath (15) Sur Kamod (16) Sur Ghatu (17) Sur Sorath (18) Sur Kedaro (19) Sur Sarang (20) Sur Asa (21) Sur Ripp (22) Sur Khahori (23) Sur Bravo Sindhi (24) Sur Ramkali (25) Sur Kapa'iti (26) Sur Purab (27) Sur Karayal (28) Sur Pirbhati (29) Sur Dahar (30) Sur Bilawal.

The list, taken from the edition of Advani¹ is broadly speaking the same in most of the other editions of the *Risalo*, even if the order of the *surs* may vary.

The division of *surs* into sections and the order of *surs* is not uniform in all the editions of *Shah jo Risalo*. For example, in Trumpp's edition, eight *surs* are omitted, especially Sur Marui, because of its length. Trumpp regretted this omission, which he said was made to reduce the price of the book.² Advani, Shahvani

1. Advani, Kalyan, *Shah jo Risalo*, Karachi, 1976.

2. Trumpp, op. cit., p.vi.

and Sorley all have thirty *surs* in the *Risalo*. The rest of the *surs* are discarded by them since they argue on stylistic grounds that they are not the works of Shah Abd al-latif.

Some of the *surs* are named on the basis of their subject matter or theme, others refer to the places where they were composed. Some bear the names of the heroines whose stories they refer to, like Lila, Mumal, Sasui, Suhni and Maru'i. Still others are named after the Indian classical *ragas* and *raginis* (male and female types of melodies).¹

There is a more recent study in English by Jotvani, entitled *Shah Abd al-Latif: His Life and Work*. He argues that the *surs* should not be treated as rigid classical *ragas*, as they do not possess those characteristics but that they can be called *Lok-ragas*. These *Lok-ragas* or *Laukika-Vinoda* he explains as:

the music produced by experts for the satisfaction of common people ...

He continues

The *Lok-ragas* are sung tunelessly to the accompaniment of a drone instrument by minstrels, *faqirs* and members of religious sects...

He concludes that Shah Abd al-Latif's poetry comes under that category.³

This is a disputeable point, a problem for linguists and phoneticians to settle, but what is not disputable is that some of these *surs* are named after the classical *ragas* and *raginis* of Indian music. Out of thirty *surs*, sixteen are named after these *ragas* and *raginis*.

1. Shahvani, op. cit., pp.49-50.

2. Jotvani, M, Shah Abd al-Latif, New Delhi, 1975, pp.87-88.

3. Ibid., p.88.

As mentioned earlier, each *sur* of *Shah jo Risalo* is divided into sections which vary in length from two to twelve, depending on the subject matter contained in the *sur*. For example *Sur Maru'i* is one of the longest *surs*, which contains twelve sections; each section contains from 9–21 couplets (*bait*s) and ends with one or more *vais*. The two smallest *surs* are *Ghatu*, having one section and *Ripp*, which consists of two sections, the first having 28 *bait*s and one *vai*, the second containing 19 *bait*s and one *vai*. In some *surs* such as *Sasui Abri* there are up to ten *vais* or *vayun*.

Three editions of *Shah jo Risalo* have been consulted frequently in this thesis. The edition of Gurbukhshani¹ is particularly useful. It is in three volumes and is provided with a commentary and notes. Because of the author's death, the fourth volume was not published and so only 18 *surs* are discussed. Advani's edition is also helpful because of its explanatory comments but it is an abbreviated edition. Shahvani's edition contains all thirty *surs* in their entire length. This has been used, whenever the other two editions have proved inadequate.

Whilst discussing the poetry of Shah Abd al-Latif' brief mention should be made of a second work which is usually attributed to him. It consists of *vayun* and *kafiyun*, which are also divided into the same *surs* (musical modes) as in the *Risalo*. But three more *surs* are added to it. In this book 233 *vayun* and 183 *kafiyun* are included. It has been published by G.M.Sayyid.²

OTHER PUBLISHED VERSIONS OF THE *RISALO* OR PARTS OF IT

Several books have been published, which consist of selections from the *Risalo*. These can be divided into various categories. They include books which consist of poetry selected from different *surs* of the *Risalo*, depending on the choice of the

1. Gurbukhshani, op. cit.

2. Sayyid, G.M. Shah, *Bhitai jun Vayun and Kafiyun*, Hyderabad Sind, 1968.

scholar, -as for example the book by Ahmed Qazi,¹ which was translated by Sorley.

There are several more such selections with or without the introduction. Some scholars select only *kafiyun* or *vayun*, such as in Harjani's² collection of *kafiyun* and in Sayyid's book on *kafiyun and vayun*.³

Yet again, other scholars have included in their anthologies selected verses from Shah Abd al-Latif's *Risalo*, as for example, a number of Baloch's collections, e.g. *Maulud*,⁴ *Tih Akhiryun*,⁵ and *Hafta Dihan Ratyun ain Mahina*.⁶ Vasvani, in one of his works, selected those verses from the *Risalo*, which contain only prayers.⁷ In other works of his there is a selection of verses and *vayun* with an interpretation and the meaning of difficult words.⁸

Muhammad Sumar Shaikh edited and published two books entitled *Shah ja Gum Thial Bait*.⁹ In the first book he includes nine *surs*, i.e. *bait*s which are not incorporated into the *Risalo*. He argues, however, that he went to the remote parts of Sind and collected the scattered poetry of Shah Abd al-Latif.¹⁰

1. Qazi, Ahmad, *Muntakhab Shah jo Risalo*, Karachi, 1880.
2. Harjani, Gidumal Khatnmal, *Shah jun Kafiyun*, Ajmer, 1949.
3. Sayyid, *op. cit.* Cf. Lashari Rashid Ahmed, *Shah jun Chund Kafiyun*, Hyderabad Sind, 1961.
4. Baloch, Nabi Bukhsh, *Maulud*, Hyderabad Sind, 1961, pp.3 and 4.
5. Idem, *Tih Akhiryun*, Hyderabad Sind, 1960, pp.1-12.
6. Idem, *Hafta Dihan Ratyun ain Mahina*, Hyderabad Sind, 1961, p.87.
7. Vasvani, Fateh Chand Mangatram, *Manajat Shah*, Shikarpur, 1946.
8. Idem, *Shahmamu*, Ajmer, 1953, Vol.I, Idem, *Latifi Lat*, Ajmer, 1953.
9. Shaikh, Muhammad Sumar, *Shah ja Gum Thial Bait*, Badin Sind, 1956.
10. Ibid.

There is yet another category of books on the work of Shah Abd al-Latif. These contain verses from only one *sur* of the *Risalo*, with individual writers giving their interpretation of that *sur*. There are more than thirty five such books. Not every *sur* has been treated in this way and whereas on some *surs* two or three books have been published, on others there are none. For example, for *Sur Kalyan*, *Yaman Kalyan*, *Sri Rag*, *Mumal*, *Sasui Abri*, *Sarang*, three different people have written on each *sur*, whereas on *Suhni* and *Maru'i* four books have been published on each:¹

There have been very few translations of the complete *Risalo* of Shah Abd al-Latif into other languages. Shaikh Ayaz, who is a well-known poet in his own right, translated the whole *Risalo* into Urdu in 1963. He produced a good translation in poetic form.

H.T. Sorley was the first Western writer who translated part of Shah Abd al-Latif's *Risalo*. He translated it into English.²

More recently Schimmel has translated some of the verses from the *Risalo* into German.³

Ghulam Ali Allana translated a selection of the poetry of Shah Abd al-Latif into English.⁴

PREVIOUS SCHOLARSHIP ON SHAH ABD AL-LATIF

Many books have been written in Sindhi on the life and work of Shah Abd al-Latif, but only a few are to be found in other languages. The list is very long of scholars in the sub-continent who have written on Shah Abd al-Latif and it is beyond the scope

1. For details Cf. bibliography.
2. Sorley, H.T., *Shah Abdul Latif of Bhit*, London, 1940.
3. Schimmel, A.M., *Pain and Grace*, Leiden, 1976, pp.277-90.
4. Allana, G.A., *Selections from the Risalo*, Karachi, 1980. Also *idem*, *Four Classic Poets of Sind*, Karachi, 1983.

of this thesis to mention each and every one of them. A brief summary only will therefore be made of some of the more interesting works written on the poet.

Among the earliest writers, the first information on the life of Shah Abd al-Latif is in the *Tuhfat al-Kiram*,¹ a biographical work by Mir Ali Shir Qani', a younger contemporary of the poet. In this work, apart from a brief biographical sketch, Qani' attributes several miracles and superstitious beliefs to our poet, as he does to other saints. The book was first written in Persian in 1767; it was translated into Sindhi and published in 1957. In his other book the author also mentions our poet.²

Richard Burton was serving as an army officer in the Lower Indus Valley in 1844, a year after Sind had been annexed to the British Empire. In his book, first published in 1851,³ he writes about the history of Sind, its people and their way of life, and includes in it some remarks about Shah Abd al-Latif and his poetry:⁴

Shah Bhetai, the Sindhi, had the disadvantage of contending against a barbarous dialect, and composing for an unimaginative people. His ornaments of verse are chiefly alliteration, puns and jingling of words. He displays his learning by allusion to the literature of Arabia and Persia, and not infrequently indulges in quotations.

A reading of the work of Shah Abd al-Latif refutes Burton's accusations against the poet. It is true that at times Shah Abd

1. Qani', Mir Ali Sher, *Tuhfat al-Kiram*, Hyderabad Sind, 1957, pp.339, 340, 356, 373, 383, 435, 563, 565, 573, 578.
2. Idem, *Maqalat al-Shu'ara*, Hyderabad Sind, 1957, pp.42'8-29.
3. Burton, Richard, *Sind and the Races that Inhabit the Valley of the Indus*, London, 1851.
4. Idem, Karachi, 1973, p.203.

al-Latif quotes verses in Arabic from the Qur'an and the *hadis*, in accordance with the tradition followed by most Muslim poets, including the great Persian masters like Hafiz, Attar and Rumi. As for Persian quotations, these are very few, except for a word or a phrase here and there. As far as Arabic literature is concerned, with the exception of references to the Prophet Muhammad and His family, including the Karbala tragedy, which are to be expected from a Muslim poet, he does not refer to any other Arabic literature. As for Persian literature, the poet uses certain common Sufi images like those of sailors and spinners which were current throughout the Islamic world, but in most cases he relies for inspiration on the indigenous folk literature of Sind.

It seems therefore that Burton failed to appreciate Shah Abd al-Latif's poetry. The way in which the poet expressed complex Sufi ideas through symbols and images, against a Sindhi background, must have made it difficult for Burton to understand his work. Moreover, the inherent difficulties of the Sindhi language led to his misunderstanding and misrepresenting the work of Shah Abd al-Latif.

Ernest Trumpp, a German missionary, has already been mentioned amongst the scholars who edited the *Risalo*. He is important because he was the first person who collected some manuscripts and published an edition of the *Risalo*¹ for the first time. Being primarily concerned with linguistic points, which were his main interest, and being a 'strictly anti-mystically minded protestant minister' as Schimmel rightly points out,² he is very critical of the poet and his work. Nevertheless, his importance lies in his editing the *Risalo*.

Lilaram Watanmal Lalvani³ wrote a whole book about the poet and his work. He interprets the whole *Risalo* in accordance

1. Trumpp, Ernest, *Shahjo Risalo*, Leipzig, 1866.
2. Schimmel, A.M., *Pain and Grace*, Leiden, 1976, p.152.
3. Lalvani, Watanmal Lilaram, *The life, religion and Poetry of Shah Abd al-Latif*, 1890.

with his own beliefs. According to him, the poetry of Shah Abd al-Latif is based mainly on Vedantic teaching. At times he expresses his surprise and irritation at the poet's expressions of love and devotion to the Prophet of Islam and at his references to the Qur'an.¹ Indeed Lalvani expects the *Risalo* to be entirely in conformity with his own religious beliefs.

Mirza Qalech Beg wrote an important work on Shah Abd al-Latif, *Ahwal Shah Abd al-Latif Bhitai*.² The book has ten chapters, in six of which he discusses the different stages and facets of the poet's life. The seventh chapter is about the *Risalo*, and discusses how it took its present form. Chapter 8 compares the poetry of Shah Abd al-Latif with that of Hafiz Shirazi. In Chapter 9 the author writes about Sufism, and *Wahdat al-Wujud*, in the light of the Qur'an and *hadis*. In the last two chapters the author speaks about each sur of the *Risalo*, explaining its religious significance.³

In 1922, M.M. Gidvani wrote a small book on the life and work of Shah Abd al-Latif. It is in English, and was probably meant as an introduction for Western Scholars.⁴

In 1924, Gulraj Parsram Jethmal wrote in English a book called *Sind and its Sufis*. This was a small book written about Sufism

1 Ibid., pp.36-7.

2. Mirza Qalech Beg, *Ahwal Shah Abdul Latif Bhitai*, Hyderabad Sind, 1897, 1972.

3. Ibid., *Latifi Lat*, Hyderabad, 1912; *Shahjo Risalo*, Hyderabad, 1913, 1922, 1923.

Reference has already been made to two textual works by the same author on the *Risalo*. Cf. also other important works by Mirza Qalech Beg:-

Idem, *Lughat Latifi*, Hyderabad Sind, 1914, 1967.

Idem, *Shahje Risale ji Kunji*, Hyderabad Sind, 1918.

Idem, *Qadim Sindh ja Sitara*, Hyderabad Sind, 1923.

Idem, *Shah Sahib Alim*, Hyderabad Sind, 1953.

4. Gidvani, M.M., *Shah Abdal-Latif*, London, 1922.

in Sind and the characteristics of Sindhi Sufis which distinguish them from other Sufis. In this book he writes only a very short general introduction about Shah Abd al-Latif and his public message but his main concern in the book is to discuss Sufis and their attitude to religion and life.¹ In his other Sindhi work he discussed the folk stories used by our poet. This book is in two volumes.²

Advani wrote two noteworthy books on the travels of Shah Abd al-Latif. In the light of those travels, he comments on his poetry and how those places and people with their customs and traditions are reflected through his poetry.³ With other poets, he selected some poetry of Shah Abd al-Latif and edited it.

Mention should now be made of Gurbukhshani, the well known scholar and authority on Shah Abd al-Latif. He wrote a long introduction to the *Risalo* and edited three volumes of it,⁴ based on eighteen *surs*. He died before he could complete his edition of all the *surs*. In his introduction he rightly draws attention to the inability of Eastern scholars to disentangle fact from fiction in connection with the life of Shah Abd al-Latif. He discards as unauthentic sections from the *Risalo*.

His work is very thorough and analytical in a scholarly way. He writes a detailed biography of the poet and discusses in some detail certain poetic themes of the *Risalo*. At the end of each volume, after the actual text, he writes about each *sur*, commenting on subject matter and giving the meaning of difficult words. He stresses especially the religious aspect of the *Risalo*. This is an extremely useful work for an understanding of the work of Shah Abd al-Latif. It is unfortunate that it is incomplete.

1. Gulraj, Jethmal Parsram, *Sind and Its Sufis*, Madras, 1924.
2. Idem., *Shah jun Akhanyun*, Hyderabad Sind, 1923.
3. Advani, Bherumal Maharchand, *Sind jo Sailani*, Hyderabad Sind, 1923; idem, *Latifi Sair*, Karachi, 1924, 1928; idem, *Chund Kalam*, Karachi, 1941.
4. Gurbukhshani, H.M., *Shah jo Risalo*, Hyderabad Sind, 1979, 3 vols.

H.T. Sorley wrote a critical account of the work of Shah Abd Al-Latif. He presented this work in 1938 for his Ph.D. thesis in London. It was published in 1940, under the title *Shah Abd al-Latif of Bhit*.¹ In this work he writes a historical account of the social and political events that took place in the time of Shah Abd al-Latif and translates into English a selection (*Muntakhab*) of the poet's work edited by Qazi Ahmed in Sindhi.² Sorley's book, *Shah Abd al-Latif of Bhit*, is divided into three parts – (1) History, (2) Literature and Criticism, (3) The *Risalo* of Shah Abd al-Latif. This was the first attempt by a Western scholar to tackle a wide subject and the project took him twelve years to accomplish. His work is appreciated by the Sindhi people because of his efforts to learn the language and to translate some of the poetry into English and to introduce it to Western readers.

Sorley's approach is a conventional one in that he presents the poet as a Sufi, little concerned with political and social conditions around him. This is one neglected area on which it is hoped the present thesis will shed some light.

In 1965, Elsa Qazi translated some of the poetry of Shah Abd al-Latif. This is an abridged selection from the *Risalo*. *Sur Kedaro* has been omitted for unknown reasons.³ Elsa Qazi's husband was a scholar of literature in his own right. He wrote an article which was published in 1961 in the form of a monograph and was later included in his wife's book. This article is a useful review of the poetry of Shah Abd al-Latif, in which he discusses the characteristics of the poetry, and submits it to critical analysis.^{4*}

1. Sorley, H.T., *Shah Abd al-Latif of Bhit*, London, 1940.
2. Qazi, Ahmad, *Muntakhab Shah Jo Risalo*, Karachi, 1880.
3. Qazi, Elsa, *Risalo of Shah Abd al-Latif*, Hyderabad Sind, 1965.
4. Qazi, I.I., *Shah Abd al-Latif: An Introduction to His Art*, Hyderabad Sind, 1961, 1973.

* It was due to Allama I.I. Kazi's help to Mrs. Elsa Kazi, that she was able to translate *Shah Jo Risalo* into English.

In 1953, G.M. Sayed wrote a book called *Paigham Latif*¹ in Sindhi. In this work the writer takes a new look at the work of Shah Abd al-Latif, in which he attempts to give a picture of the religious, cultural and political atmosphere of Sind in the poet's time. According to him, the poet was a great patriot whose message to the depressed masses of Sind was to fight to obtain their rights. He also compares and contrasts the personalities of Shah Abd al-Latif and Muhammad Iqbal.

Tanvir Abbasi's book called *Shah Latif ji Sha'iri*, was published in 1976. He is one of the few writers who have broken away from the traditional, often repeated interpretations of the *Risalo*, and he has approached the work from a different angle. He examines the poetry according to the criteria of Western literary criticism. His work is written in Sindhi and is therefore of limited circulation.²

Apart from Sorley, Schimmel is the only Western Scholar who is an authority on Sindhi literature in general and Shah Abd al-Latif in particular. By including the Sufi poets of the sub-continent and above all Shah Abd al-Latif in her work *Mystical Dimensions of Islam*,³ she has given him his rightful place among the Sufi poets of India and Pakistan and of the Islamic world. Several scholars before her, including Arberry, who wrote on Sufi poets, excluded Shah Abd al-Latif from their discussions.

Schimmel's *Sindhi Literature*⁴ is systematic and well documented and the best work of its kind in a Western language.

Schimmel's recent work entitled *Pain and Grace*⁵ is a scho-

1. Sayyid, G.M., *Paigham Latif*, Hyderabad Sind, 1953.
2. Abbasi, Tanvir, *Shah Latif ji Sha'iri*, Karachi, 1976.
3. Schimmel, A.M., *Mystical Dimensions of Islam*, Chapel Hill, 1975.
4. Eadem, 'Sindhi Literature', *A History of Indian Literature*, Vol. III, Part II, Wiesbaden, 1976-7.
5. Eadem, *Pain and Grace*, Leiden, 1976.

larly work of great value. In it the lives and works of two poets, Mir Dard and Shah Abd al-Latif, are discussed. The part devoted to Shah Abd al-Latif is divided into three sections. The first is about the life and teaching of Shah Abd al-Latif. The second part concerns Sufis and Yogis, and the third discusses the Islamic background. The first and third sections are dealt with beautifully, but with perhaps a little too much emphasis placed on the Islamic side. She seems to be in agreement with Sindhi-Muslim scholars, and even with Sorley, who believe that the *Risalo* is solely based on Islamic teaching and on the Qur'an and *hadis*.

In her second section on Yogis and Sufis, although she refers to yogis, one has the impression that their importance is not fully recognised. Yogis played a great role in the life of Shah Abd al-Latif, especially at a very critical stage, when he spent three years of his life in their company. This left a permanent influence on his life.

As is the case with other scholars, whether Hindus, Muslims or Western, who have worked on Shah Abd al-Latif, Schimmel makes the comment that women also played a positive role in the poetry of Shah Abd al-Latif. This is, however, an aspect of his work which deserves much more extended treatment than hitherto accorded to it.

There is a recent work of Ajvani,¹ in which he writes a chapter about the predecessors of Shah Abd al-Latif and he also devotes two chapters to the life of Shah Abd al-Latif and to his *Shah jo Risalo*. The work is marred by his approach, which is very partial.

On the one hand, he names the prominent poets and learned men of Sind, like Qazi Qazan, Shah Karim of Bulri, Shah Abd al-Latif, Khwaja Muhammad Zaman of Lawanri, Pir Muhammad Baqa, Sahibdino Faqir, Makhdum Abd al-Rahim of Grihori and

1. Ajvani, L.H., *History of Sindhi Literature*, New Delhi, 1970.

Sachal Sarmast¹ and several others who happened to be all Muslims. Some of the names mentioned above were predecessors, and others were contemporaries of Shah Abd al-Latif. They were the product of the Samma and Kalhora periods. On the other hand, while referring to Muslim rule he writes:

This long period of thousand years or more of Muslim rule in Sind was a period of almost progressive degeneration for Sind and Sindhis...

He argues elsewhere, however, that Sind under its Hindu possessors was a rich, flourishing and extensive monarchy.²

While praising Shah Abd al-Latif and his poetry he suggests that he was exclusively inspired by Hindu thought. He strongly criticises Sorley and Baloch for suggesting that the poetry of Shah Abd al-Latif is based on Sufism. He argues that if the poetry is Islamic, Hindus would not have considered his book *Risalo* as a sacred book.³

Jotvani's book published in 1975, *Shah Abd al-Latif: His life and Work*, is a study of the *Risalo* and a critical view of some of the other works written on *Shah jo Risalo*. His approach is subjective and at times defensive, as he tries to interpret the work of Shah Abd al-Latif as entirely based on Hindu thought. He even tries to prove that Shah Abd al-Latif was only born a Muslim, but that he was unorthodox in his Muslim beliefs. Jotvani's work was first presented as a Ph.D. thesis in Delhi, then published as a book.⁴ He seeks to prove the debt which Shah Abd al-Latif owed to Hindu philosophy and that all his poetry is the result and influence of Vedantic thought. Defending his point he goes to an extreme.

1. Ajvani, op. cit., pp.87, 111.

2. Idem, p.6.

3. Ajvani, op. cit., p.14.

4. Jotvani, M., *Shah Abd al-Latif: His Life and Work*, New Delhi, 1975.

It must be admitted that contemporary Hindu scholars in India such as these last two, when writing about Shah Abd al-Latif and his work strongly criticise the attitude of Muslim scholars who try to prove that the whole Risalo is based on the Qur'an and Tradition. It is noteworthy, however, that the efforts of these Hindu scholars are similarly directed towards proving that the poetry of Shah Abd al-Latif is not Islamic at all.

Shah Abd al-Latif's poetry had a universal appeal for everyone who believed in truth and justice, irrespective of religious differences. Our respected scholars should not get irritated at categorisations such as Hindu or Muslim, Qur'an or Vedanta. For a seeker after truth, like Shah Abd al-Latif, all religious books were sources of knowledge, which pointed in the same direction, that of love, unity and peace for mankind. Ideally of course, Shah Abd al-Latif's poetry should not be restricted to any narrow description or definition. He was neither a pandit nor mulla preaching either religion. He was in fact a believer in *Wahdat al-wujud*, and appreciated unity behind diversity. This was the main feature in his work which appealed to Muslims as well as Hindus, and this was the common element in their respective religious philosophies.

A JUSTIFICATION FOR THIS THESIS

Shah Abd al-Latif is the first Sindhi poet on whom an enormous amount of material has been published. Most scholars have, however, concentrated on religious aspects of his poetry¹ and it seems to the writer of this thesis that too much emphasis has been laid on these aspects to the exclusion of all else. It is indisputable that the major part of his work is Sufi in inspiration but to interpret his poetry exclusively in this way is to reduce his

1. Cf. Rashidi Pir Husam al-Din, Presidential address, *Latif Salgirah Makhzan*, No.3, 1961, pp.13-16.

stature as a writer of genius with universal appeal. In particular, this thesis hopes to highlight certain social and patriotic aspects of the *Risalo* as well as to provide analyses of the poet's debt on the one hand to his experiences shared with the yogis and, on the other, to the works of two great Persian Sufi poetic masters, Attar and Rumi.

CHAPTER 2

WOMEN IN THE POETRY OF SHAH ABD AL-LATIF

The important role played by women in the poetry of Shah Abd al-Latif

A study of the life and work of Shah Abd al-Latif reveals a broader dimension than has been suggested by previous scholars. In most cases our poet has been represented merely as a saint or Sufi, whose work is based mainly on Quranic teaching¹ or Vedantic philosophy.² As a human being and a poet, Shah Abd al-Latif passed through different phases of life and expressed his feelings and experiences through his poetry. Of particular interest is the way in which his poetry often presents life from the woman's point of view. He expresses women's feelings and problems, even offering advice and suggesting solutions to them. Moreover, Shah Abd al-Latif, as will be discussed later in this chapter in more detail, stresses active participation on the part of the women in his poetry.

In the Sufi literature of other Islamic countries, i.e that written in Arabic, Persian or Turkish, one does not find such an emphasis on the female role in matters of love, either worldly or mystical

1. Mirza Qalech Beg, *Ahwal Shah Abd al-Latif*, Bhitshah, 1972, pp.35 and 94-181.
2. Jotvani Motilal, *Shah Abd al-Latif: His Life and Work*, Delhi 1975, pp.129-146.

(with the probable exception of Zulekha.¹ In much Sufi poetry there is of course reference to the soul as a male seeker who undergoes various hardships in order to attain the 'Divine Beloved'. The language in which the beloved is depicted suggests a female possessing perfect divine beauty. Medieval Muslim poets used the traditional female images of pre-Islamic poetry such as Salma, Hind (even Laila and Shirin), referring to their beauty and other admirable qualities, which in fact came to mirror the attributes of God,² but these figures are treated as the passive partners of men. It is Majnun or Farhad who perform heroic deeds and women are presented as frail and helpless, entirely dependent on the mercy of men, waiting for them to come and rescue them. A man like Farhad would achieve impossible feats, such as digging or cutting through the mountains to divert the stream of milk to Shirin's house. Such men would cross oceans, kill lions and perform great deeds to display their strength to win the hand of their beloved from their father, again a dominant male figure.

It could happen, of course, that Sufi poets represent both parties, i.e. the seeker and the beloved as male. In the poetry of Jalal al-Din Rumi (for example),³ the beloved is clearly addressed as a man, whilst the lover or seeker is the poet himself.

With Shah Abd al-Latif, there is a very different emphasis on the seeker beloved relationship. This does not arise out of a vacuum. Indeed, the expression of love from the woman's point of view was a well-established local tradition, adopted by other Sufi poets of the Indus Valley. Folk stories in which women play the dominant role abound in Sind and the surrounding states like Rajasthan, Baluchistan and Punjab in the period before Shah Abd al-Latif. These stories were taken by poets as themes for their works. Among the very little written Sindhi poetry that has survived in the period before Shah Abd al-Latif is that of Shah Abd al-Karim

1. Zulekha is depicted in the Qur'an as taking the initiative with Yusuf and this tradition is perpetuated in Persian poetry, especially in the work of Jami.
2. Schimmel, A.M., *Pain and Grace*, Leiden, 1976, p. 173.
3. Jalal al-Din Rumi, *Masnawi-yi manawi*, trans. Nicholson R.A., London, 1925-1940, 8 vols.

of Bulri (1536–1624), and Shah Inayat Rizvi (1622–1712 A.D.), both of whom use these folk stories as themes for their poetry. It is evidently this local tradition inherited from his predecessors that Shah Abd al-Latif develops more fully.

Shah Abd al-Karim, the great grandfather of Shah Abd al-Latif draws extensively on Sindhi folk stories in his poetry. In his work, *Bayan al-Arifin*, which is written in Persian, there are 93 Sindhi baits which have survived.¹ In these baits, Shah Abd al-Karim refers specifically to local Sindhi folk heroes and heroines, such as Sasui and Punhu, Marui and Umar, Lila and Chanesar, and Suhni and Mehar.² It is clear from his treatment of these four stories that the poet sees women as playing the active role and it is they who speak of love in the poetry.

From the starting point of these well-known local heroines of Sind, Shah Abd al-Karim infuses Sufi spirit into his treatment of their stories. In one place, the poet addresses Sasui thus:

O Woman! Avoid sitting under the thatched roof.
Stand, burning in the sun;
You chose those people as your own
Who are of far-away sunny land.³

Again, in another verse, Shah Abd al-Karim addresses his heroine Suhni as follows:

1. Nizamani, M.M., *Risalo Shah Abd al-Karim*, Hyderabad Sind, 1961.
The work of Shah Abd al-Karim has been published by various scholars:
Daudpoto, U.M., *Shah Karim Bulriware jo kalam*, Sukkur, 1963.
Malmun Abd al-Majid, *Karim jo Kalam*, Sukkur, 1963.
Mirza Qalech Beg, *Risalo Karimi*, Hyderabad Sind, 1904.
Nawarangpoto Makhdum Abdal, *Bayan al-Arifin (Sindhi)*, Bombay, 1874.
The Sindhi verses of Shah Abd al-Karim have been translated into English by Jotvani: Jotvani Motilal, *Shah Abd al-Karim*, New Delhi, 1979.
2. For detailed accounts of the folk stories, cf. the Appendix.
3. Jotvani Motilal, *Sindhi Literature and Society*, New Delhi, 1979, p.39.

Either leave not your home,
Or return not, O Suhni.
Be of one mind, be one with Him and break all
other things.¹

Maru'i, a poor girl who is imprisoned in the fort of Umar the king, is determined not to give up, and questions the king:²

Umar! can a woman in bondage put on good
clothes?
My lover feels embarrassed before others who
reproach him because of me.

Lila is longing for her husband, who has deserted her and Shah Abd al-Karim speaks for her in the following lines:³

On whose heart
You've left an indelible mark.
O Chanesar Dasara! How can you now draw away
yourself from her?

Mumal is another heroine who, after losing her husband, is longing for him in anguish, and the poet expresses the torments she is experiencing:⁴

Friend, away with your home,
the caravan is speeding away from me.
Your home, unlike mine, knows no burning like
the wick of a lamp.

Another poet, Miyan Shah Inayat Rizvi (d.1712 A.D.) who was alive when Shah Abd al-Latif was a young man, continues this

1. Ibid., p.40.

2. Ibid.

3. Jotvani, op. cit., p.44.

4. Ibid., p.39.

local Sindhi folk tradition in his poetry. Of his twenty two extant surs, six draw on local folk stories of Sind using well-known heroines, such as Maru'i, Mumal, Lila, Sasui, Suhni and Nuri. He also speaks of merchants and their wives in *Sur Sri Rag* and of women-spinners in *Sur Kapa'iti*. In these eight surs, the role of women is prominent.¹

In *Sur Sri Rag*, the poet describes the waiting and hope of a merchant's wife in the following lines:²

تَرِ سِرِ تَوَارِي، اُپِي مَکِّي اُوسهيون،
اکَرِيون اوڙاه ڏونه، نئين سج نهاري،
آلا! اَکَرِ آئين، سو وڻجارو واري،
کلي کيکاري، تہ اُن ڳالھاري، ڳر لايان.

On the landing place, where the Sir³ is chirping,
She (the woman) is standing and praying for
a (good) omen.

At (the time of) early sunrise,
her eyes are fixed on the deep waters.
O God! bring back the merchant to my courtyard
He will make a laughing greeting and I will talk
without stopping and will embrace him.

In the above verse the language indicates that the speaker is a woman.

From the preceding discussion of the poetry of both Shah Abd al-Karim and Shah Inayat Rizvi, it is clear that the poetry of Shah Abd al-Latif sprang from a well-established local poetic tradition which inevitably drew on Persian Sufi thought, but also

1. Baloch, N.B., *Miyen Shah Inayat jo Kalam*, Hyderabad Sind, 1963.

2. Baloch, op. cit., p.35.

3. The *Sir* is a black aquatic bird of the crane family.

derived much inspiration from local Sindhi folk stories. Shah Abd al-Latif, however, as will be shown later, composed poetry which, it is argued, has greater depth than Shah Inayat Rizvi.

It is interesting to note that a contemporary of Shah Abd al-Latif, Bullhe Shah¹ (1680–1758) from Punjab, also speaks of an active rather than passive female role in his Sufi poetry. It is not known if the two poets ever met at any time, but there are a number of similarities in their works. Bullhe Shah, like Shah Abd al-Latif, stresses the feminine role in a great number of his *kafiyun*. Some of the *kafiyun* are composed out of love for his *murshid*, Shah Inayat, but it is significant that he addresses him as if he were a woman yearning for her sweetheart, and expressing her emotions to him. One observes enormous pain in the heart of the woman who happens to be the lover.¹ Bullhe Shah describes the numerous sufferings and tribulations to which he is subjected in his assumed female identity.

Bullhe Shah expresses his feeling of self-abasement from the viewpoint of the woman. Sometimes he speaks of the love of the human being for God: on other occasions he refers to the relationship between *murshid* and *murid*:—

I am just a sweepress
 Hair uncombed, barefoot, I receive word of his
 coming, and am left perturbed.
 I broom my meditation: with it I've swept into
 my basket all that the world has left.
 The judge knows much, the king rules with fear,
 but I am happy to be allowed in here.
 I am just a sweepress.²

In the poetry of Bullhe Shah one also finds *kafiyun* about spinners, another common theme of Sufi poetry. An example is

1. Rafat, Taufiq, *Bullhe Shah, Selection*, Lahore, 1982.
 According to Hindu philosophy, especially Bhakti System, the human soul is likened to a woman who is separated from her lawful husband (GOD).
2. Rafat, op. cit., p.167.

the poet's advice to spinners, who are women:¹

Lass, look to your spinning
 Mother scolds you every day,
 but your mind is far away,
 you keep modesty at bay,
 When will you understand?
 Lass, look to your spinning
 So much advice I hurl
 each day at this silly girl;
 she will be in a whirl
 when bad times are at hand.
 Lass, look to your spinning.

It is noteworthy that in the work of Shah Abd al-Latif there are two distinct and sharply contrasting views of woman. On the one hand, Shah Abd al-Latif can go to similar extremes as Bullhe Shah in his depiction of woman as an abject, submissive creature within, of course, the traditional Sufi framework. For example, he makes Nuri admit her low caste:²

تُون سمون، آئون گندري، مون م عيبن جو ء
 پسي راڻين رو ء مٿان ماڱر مٽين.

You are Sammo³ and I am gandari,⁴
 there are innumerable faults in me.
 By comparing me with queens
 pray never desert the *mangar*.⁵

1. Idem, p.131.
2. Advani, *op. cit.*, p.286.
3. Samma is the name of a dynasty. Here the poet makes a reference to Tamachi, one of the *Sammakings*.
4. Castes of fishermen.
5. Castes of fishermen

Nuri also refers to herself as dirty and foul-smelling:¹

تُون سَمُونِ آئون گندري، مون ۾ عيبن ڪوڙ،
پسي ڪڪيءَ ڪوڙ مٿان ماڳر مٽين.

You are *Sammo* and I am *gandari*,
there are millions of faults in me.
By seeing and smelling the stinking (fish)
pray never desert the *mangar*.

Similarly, Sasui when expressing her love and submission to Punhu, likens herself to the slipper of her beloved.

On the other hand, as will be discussed later, a heroine of Shah Abd al-Latif such as Marui can admit her poverty, but at the same time take pride in it.

Another well-known poet, contemporary with Shah Abd al-Latif, was Sachal Sarmast (1739–1829),² who was much younger than our poet. Sachal Sarmast follows the same tradition as Shah Abd al-Latif in using feminine terminology to express the feelings of a lover or seeker. In his poetry one finds the same local folk stories as those used by Shah Abd al-Latif and his predecessors, such as the tales of Sasui, Suhni and Mumal who are lovers longing, lamenting and struggling to attain their respective beloveds. For example, the poet makes Sasui address Punhu in the following *Kafi*:³

توريءَ ڳالهيون ڪنهن سان ڪنديس، آءُ وَرَ واڳ ورائي!
واٽَ نَرِ وَنڊَر جِي لَهان، وڌيس مُنجه مُنجهائي

1. Shahvani, op. cit., 857.

2. Ansari Usman Ali, *Risalo Sachal Sarmast*, Hyderabad Sind, 1978.

3. Ibid., pp.91–2.

سِڪَ تَنهجي سُرِين، دُنڱرَ تِي دُوراني
 هيڪاندي هيءَ حَبَ ۾ ويٺي ورهه وسائي
 طَعَنَ شَهَرِ پَنپورَ جي، وِڌو تَن تَپائي
 جيهو تيهو سُرِين ”سچو“ سَنڌو سَڌائي.

Without you, with whom will I converse?

Come back to me, my husband

I cannot find my way in Winder¹

This bewilderment has confused me.

Longing for you has compelled me to cross the
 mountain.

All alone in Habb, I am yearning in separation

Taunting in the city of Bhanbhore
 has alarmed me.

In whatever condition I am, my beloved,

Sachu (i.e. the poet) belongs to you.

Throughout this *kafi* the terminology indicates that the speaker is Sasui, i.e. a woman, but in the last line the poet appears on the scene and mentions his own name, addressing the beloved directly.

On another occasion Sachal, like Shah Abd al-Latif, advises Sasui, and tells her what to do.²

ويھُ نہ وساريڃ، مَتان ماڻَ ڪَري ويھين
 قُولِ اهو پاريج، هو جو ڪَيرُئي هُوتَ سين.

Do not sit down quietly and forget about it,

The promise which you gave to your beloved you
 must fulfil that promise.

Since this verse is from *Sur Sasui*, it is evident that the poet is reminding Sasui. Moreover, the word *hoat* suggests that the

1. The name of a mountain.
2. Ansari, op. cit., p.342.

reference is to Purhu who was her beloved (*hoat*).

Sachal Sarmast, like Shah Abd al-Latif, uses verbs and pronouns in such a way as to indicate that the speaker is a woman. There are a number of *kafiyun* which are not related to the above-mentioned folk stories, but the terminology suggests once again that they are sung by a woman. In Sachal Sarmast's works one notices a greater degree of submissiveness and humility on the part of the women. In many *kafiyun* the poet gives his name in the end, which suggests that he has taken the role of a woman himself, like Bullhe Shah, either to address God or his spiritual guide.¹

ڙي جيڏيون، منهنجي يار سَڄڻ سان زاري زاري،
هيءَ نِمائي عيبن هاڻي، پرہ سندن آهي باري باري
حاضر ٿيندس در دوستن جي، پائي ڳچيءَ سان ڳاري ڳاري
پوءِ ته پاڪي يار ٿيو سي، پهريون لائي ياري ياري
هٿ سَڄڻ جي آديون ڙي آهي، ڳالهه ”سچو“ جي ساري

O girl friends, in the presence of my beloved
I am powerless.

This humble one, full of faults is suffering
from his separation which is great.

I will present myself before my friend
by putting my scarf round my neck.²

After kindling his friendship,
he has abandoned me.

O sisters, everything (every task) of Sachu
is in his hands.

As has been argued here, the representation of women as active in the role of lover was not only a tradition in Sind but it was widespread throughout the sub-continent.

1. Rafat, op. cit., p.164.

2. It is a symbol of submission to put one's scarf around the neck and beg for forgiveness.

There is an example in Hindu religious scriptures, i.e. the *Bhagavad Purana*,¹ where Gopis are presented as lovers, seeking and longing to see Krishna their beloved, and an analogy may perhaps be drawn between the love, longing and suffering experienced by the heroines in the poetry of Shah Abd al-Latif and similar experiences undergone by the *Gopis* in this work.² According to this Hindu scripture, Lord Krishna³ plays such an enchanting flute that all the milk maids (*Gopis*) are fascinated by him. When they are busy performing their duties and they hear Krishna's flute, they leave every task unfinished and rush to see him.

Some, who were serving food (to their husbands and other relatives) went away, neglecting that duty; others, who were feeding their infants with milk gave up that work and ran. Still others, who were waiting upon their husbands, turned their backs on them and departed, while yet others who were dining, bolted away, leaving their meal.⁴

In the poetry of Shah Abd al-Latif, Suhni leaves her husband every night to visit her beloved Mehar. Sasuj also leaves everything, even her home and parents, to travel emptyhanded, searching for her beloved husband Punhu.

For Shah Abd al-Latif women play the important role in most of his poetry; indeed they are mentioned directly or indirectly in twenty-eight *surs* out of the thirty *surs* of the *Risalo*. In his second work *Shah Bhitai jun Vayun ain Kafiyyun*⁵ there are terms used throughout by the poet, such as جیذیون, پینر سرتیون, ادیون which mean sisters and friends; ماء جیجل, امّ meaning mother. Apart from such examples as these, throughout both the works

1. *Srimad Bhagavad Maha Purana*, tr. Goswami, C.L. and Sastri, M.A., Gorakhpur, 1971.
2. *Ibid.*, Books 9–12, p. 1174.
3. In this text Krishna is a young cowherd, with whom all the *Gopis* are in love.
4. *Ibid.*
5. Sayyid, G.M., *Shah Bhitai jun Vayun ain Kafiyyun*, Hyderabad Sind, 1965.

of Shah Abd al-Latif one finds words or phrases like, ورہ وھایم
ماروترا مانگیترا ھیڪڙو سڄڻ ھیڪڙو and the addi-
کانگڙو or سنهڙو suggests
 the feminine form of endearment. In the Sindhi language pronouns
 accompanied by verbs distinguish clearly between male and
 female, unlike the Persian language where it is difficult to distin-
 guish between the sexes of the addressee and addressed. Con-
 sequently, it is not difficult in the Sindhi language to tell whether
 the speaker is the male or female.

There are several verses in the *Risalo*,¹ the content of which
 suggests that the poet is speaking on behalf of women. For
 example, it was a local characteristic of women in rural areas of
 Sind to consider a crow as the messenger who would take and
 bring back love messages for them. So they use words of endear-
 ment to the crow and request it to take their message to their
 beloved. For example:²

آءُ اُڏامي ڪانگڙا! پارانيان پڄار،
 ويهي هٿِ وصالَ جو، تان ڪو ترُ تنوار،
 جي ڏسڻ ۾ ڏيسار، سي اُڏامي آڻِ پرين.

O dear crow! come and bring me the message
 (i.e. from the beloved) and tell me about him.
 Sit here and tell me something about our
 (i.e. future) meeting.
 The beloved who is apparently in a far-off land,
 fly him to me.

In the above verse the crow, which is normally called *kang*,
 is referred to as *kangro*; the addition of the suffix *ro* indicates
 that the crow is being addressed with a term of endearment by
 the woman.

1. Advani, Kalyan, *Shah jo Risalo*, Karachi, 1976.

2. Advani, op. cit., p.428.

Shah Abd al-Latif uses eight folk stories as themes for his *Risalo*, in six of which women play the prominent role. Five *surs* of the *Risalo* are devoted to Sasui, a Sindhi folk heroine. Heroines such as Lila, Nuri, Suhni, Mumal and Marui are given one *sur* each. Each one of them is represented as a lover in search of her beloved. Marui is a lover of a different kind, a point which we shall discuss later in this chapter. In both the works of Shah Abd al-Latif there are substantial parts which deal with romantic love, and it is a woman who is expressing such feelings. She yearns to see her beloved and is willing to make every kind of sacrifice to attain the object of her desire.

In *Sur Yaman Kalyan*, as the *vai* given below suggests, a woman, most probably Sasui, though her name is not given, is complaining at being separated from her beloved.¹

وائي
 وَتَرَوُ هَوْتَ وَجَنِ، ووا جَهْلِيانِ پَليانِ، هِيَرَوُ نہ رهي!
 آئونُ جَنِينِ جِي آهيانِ، ڪَري مَرِ تيانِ تَنِ،
 جَهْلِيانِ پَليانِ، هِيَرَوُ نہ رهي!
 گهورِيانِ گهڻين يَتِينِ، سنڌي ٻاجھ ٻُڻنِ،
 جَهْلِيانِ پَليانِ، هِيَرَوُ نہ رهي!
 مَرُ مَرانِ مارينِ مونَ، پُرزا پُرزا ڪَنِ،
 جَهْلِيانِ پَليانِ، هِيَرَوُ نہ رهي!
 آئونُ مِياني گهورِيئي، جِي مان مُجِبِ مِلَنِ،
 جَهْلِيانِ پَليانِ، هِيَرَوُ نہ رهي!

They are taking away my beloved, alas!

I am withholding and restraining myself, but my
 heart will not obey.

To whom I belong, I hope they do not get
 embittered with me

1. Shahvani, op. cit., pp.132-3.

I am withholding and restraining myself...
 I will sacrifice myself in several ways,
 but sympathy lies in the hands of others.
 If I am to die, let them kill me
 and cut me to pieces.
 I am withholding and restraining myself, but my
 heart will not obey.
 If I have to die, let me be the sacrifice,
 if only I can meet my beloved.
 I am withholding and restraining myself,
 but my heart will not obey.

It is a characteristic of Oriental poetry that the lover who is a man, discloses his secrets of love to the moon. Shah Abd al-Latif adopts this poetic cliché of the imagery of the moon but he breaks with tradition by making the conveyor of the message in many cases a woman. Sometimes the woman is shown whispering to the moon, asking it to take her glad tidings to the beloved.

On other occasions she compares her beloved with the moon,¹ and reproaches it, saying that it may be beautiful, but that it cannot compete with the beauty of her beloved.

On one occasion a woman is making a request to the moon to rise soon and to see the beloved on her behalf. She tells the moon why she cannot go herself and visit her beloved.²

اَیْرُ چَنَدَ! پَسُ پَرِین، تو اوڏا، مُون ڏور،
 سَڄڻ سَٿا وَلَهَ ۾ چوٽا پَري ڪَپُور،
 پیرین آئون نہ پُڄِي ٻاڳلَ ڏي نہ پور،
 جِهَ تي چَڙهي اَسُور، سَنجھي سَڄڻ سَيتان.

O moon! You must rise and have a
 look at my beloved.

1. As is well-known, in oriental poetry the moon is considered to be the symbol of beauty. The lover compares the beauty of his beloved with the moon and a person with a beautiful face is moon-faced.

2. Shahvani, op. cit., pp.171-2.

He (the beloved) is near you, but far from me.
 My beloved has put sandalwood¹ in his hair and
 is sleeping in the cold open air.
 I cannot reach him on foot,
 And my father will not give me a camel
 On which I can ride through the night and reach
 my beloved.

It is quite clear here that the speaker is a woman.

Again and again the poet refers to the difficulties with which women are confronted. Nevertheless, it is the woman who is the lover, who is longing and thinking about her beloved.²

ڪَڙهو، نڪي ڪا، پيرين آئون نه پڄي،
 جو مون راتِ رسائي، نپي ساجن ساڻ،
 مون نه وهڻون پاڻ! ويئي نين نچوڻيان.

I do not have a camel or a horse
 which can carry me to my beloved overnight.
 My 'self' is not under my control.
 I am sitting and shedding tears.

In the above verses the verbs indicate the speaker to be a woman, who is longing to reach her beloved, but who is unable to do so because he is out of her reach.

In *SurSuhni* our poet paints the picture of Suhni who, ignoring the warnings of everyone, jumps into the river and sacrifices her life for the beloved.³

1. In olden days it was the custom to use perfumed oil for one's hair, for fragrance, and it was considered to be good for the growth of hair.

2. Shahvani, op. cit., p.173.

4. Shahvani, op. cit., p.304.

پَلِ پَلِ تِي پَلِي، دَمَ دِيهائي ڪيترو،
 پَسِي دَوَرُ درياهَ جو، وِچان ڪينَ وِلي،
 ڪاريءَ راتِ قَرِيبَ دِي، مَنجها حُبَ هلي،
 نَه ڪَه جَهول جَهلي، هُنِي سَمَن پُوري سُهڻِي.

Every day and every moment Dam was
 stopping her,
 Even the sight of the strong current in the river
 did not make her return.
 Out of love, in the dark night, she went to her
 beloved
 Diving into the whirlpool did not prevent her
 because Suhni was true to her promise.

WOMEN AND SOCIETY:

In the poetry of Shah Abd al-Latif he reveals sympathy for the weaker sections of society. In many of his verses it could be argued that he expresses the hopes and fears of the suppressed classes, comforting them in their miseries and encouraging them to struggle for their rights. He must have observed that women were the most oppressed class in society and he may well have given thought to their problems and decided to encourage them to struggle for improvement of their position. In a statement which he clearly addressed to women, he comments:

سڀ ننگيون تِي نڪرو، لالچِ چڙهي لوڀ،
 سڀيريان سين سوڀ، ننڍون ڪندي نه ٿي.

By giving up avarice, greed and clothing¹
 set out for the desired goal.

1. It is possible that the poet means specifically the veil here. Certainly, if taken literally, the command suggests the shedding by women of their inhibitions.

Success with the beloved cannot be
achieved merely by sleeping.¹

In his poetry Shah Abd al-Latif often addresses women, offering them advice. In *Sur Samundhi* Shah Abd al-Latif seems to be warning women in general, and the wives of sailors in particular to beware of the forthcoming dangers:

پڳھ پاسي گھار، آيل! سامونڊين جي،
وجهي جي! جنجار، جمر وڃيئي اوھري.

O mother!² Stay beside the rope of the seafarers
lest they should sail away in their boats,
causing you heartache.³

Shah Abd al-Latif seems to appreciate the courage of women and their determination in adversity.

تڏي ۽ ٽڪي نه وهي، تتي ڪري تان،
وڌائين وڻڪار ۾، سسئي ۽ پاڻ سڪاڻ،
پڇي پڻ پڪين کي، پيئي منڍ پرياڻ،
ڏنس ڌي وڻن جا، تن الله لڳ اھياڻ،
مان پرچي پاڻ، اچي آرياڻي وري.

She does not take rest in the shade, even though
she is tired and she is proceeding in the heat.
Sasui has come to Wankar and has exhausted⁴
herself.

1. Advani, op. cit., p.156.

2. It is a polite way of addressing a woman in Sindhi.

3. Advani, op. cit., p.78.

4. Literally 'withered', dessicated.

The woman¹ is enquiring about his whereabouts²
from the birds.

In the name of God, they³ have given her directions
to follow the trees, towards that place.⁴

May Aryan⁵ be reconciled and come back.⁶

In another example given below, the poet reveals his admiration for Sasui's tenacity in the face of difficulties:

ڪنڊا مٿن پيرن ۾ توڻي لڪ لڳن،
اگر آڱوڻي نه مڙي، ڇپوڻ پير چنن،
ويندي ڏانهن پرين، جتي جات نه پائين.

Let thousands of thorns prick my feet
and the mountain lacerate them.
Even if my toes and fingers become dislocated,
I will not wear the slipper while going
to my beloved.⁷

In these verses, the poet is expressing Sasui's determination to achieve her goal. Her particular example may be extended to serve as a model for women in general. While putting words into Sasui's mouth, our poet commands women to give up inhibitions and to perform courageous deeds.

1. This reference is to Sasui; for details of the story of Sasui and Punhu, cf. the Appendix.
2. Sasui is enquiring about Punhu.
3. I.e. the birds.
4. I.e. Kech where Punhu lived.
5. I.e. Punhu.
6. Advani, op. cit., p. 161.
7. Advani, op. cit., p. 159.

آديون! وَرُ اُگهَارَ، وِهان؛ جنهن وِ ساريو،
جيدِيُون! چڏي جاڙ، سڀ ننگيون ٿي نڪرو.

Sisters! success is theirs, who abandon
vanity.

Friends! you must give up headlessness.
Become naked¹ and come out.²

In the poetry of Shah Abd al-Latif, at times our poet accuses women of negligence. Here he is blaming the wife of a sailor:

پڳه پاسي ويه، آيل! سامونڊين جي،
تون ويسري وڪ کڻين، هو پوريندا پرڏي،
سمند جن ساڙي، ڪو نه وڻين تن سين؟

O mother! sit beside the rope of the
seafarers,
While you are taking slow steps
They will proceed swiftly to the
foreign land.
The sea is their home, why did
you not go with them?³

On other occasions our poet makes the wife of a sailor blame herself for not acting at the right time:

جيڪس نير نيئ سَندور جنءِ مون آبي، هن ٿيلو،
سعيو سامونڊين سين، اڳهر تان نه ڪٽو،
وجھڻ منجه هٿو، پاڻ وراڪي رس سين.

1. i.e. give up inhibitions.
2. Advani, op. cit., p.156.
3. Shahvani, op. cit., pp.143-4.

Perhaps my love was weak, as they
 sailed away while I stood there.
 I did not prepare myself beforehand for
 the seafarers.
 I should have tied myself up with
 the string and put myself in it (i.e. the ship).¹

By addressing women directly, the poet gives them a valid social status and recognition as individuals having their own identity. He wishes to encourage them to recognise and realise their own potential. He addresses Sasui in the following lines:

وَدَو طَالُعُ تَو، جِنَّ لَکِنَّ پِيرِ پُنْهُو جِي،
 سَسُئِي! اِن سَتُون کِي، رُوِيُو رُوِيُو،
 وَيْنِي هِت مَر هُو، هَلِين تَه هُوْت لَهِين.

It is your great luck to follow the footprints
 of Punhu.

Sasui! continue crying² for that support.³
 Do not sit down; as you proceed
 you will find the beloved.⁴

In the above verse Shah Abd al-Latif addresses Sasui directly, then welcomes her quest of Punhu. He even gives her hope that she will ultimately succeed. While advising her to use all her potential, he says:

هَتِين، پِيرِين، مُؤْتَرِئِين، هَلِج سَا لُ هِنْتِين،
 عَشَقُ آرِيء جَامَر جُو، نِبَاهِي نَتِين،
 جَان جَان تِي جَتِين، تَان پَاتِجِ كُو مَر پُنْهُونء سِين.

1. Shahvani, op. cit., p.248.
2. Here the poet suggests continued pursuit of a certain goal.
3. Literally pillar; i.e. Punhu.
4. Shahvani, op. cit., p.418.

You must walk with your hands, feet, knees
and even with your soul.
In this way accomplish your love with Ari Jam.¹
As long as you live, never equate anyone with
Punhu.²

It is customary in the East and West to associate medieval poetry and other forms of literature primarily with the elite and the upper-classes of society and to use characters and themes connected with the life of the nobility. It is significant that in his use of folk-stories in his poetry and, in particular, in his selection of characters, Shah Abd al-Latif opts predominantly for people from the lower working-classes. Instead of praising kings and nobles, he praises the poor, who, he suggests, possess more virtues than the rich.

His heroine, Nuri, is a poor fisherwoman; Sasui, although she is in reality a princess, lives as the adopted daughter of a washerman. Suhni is the daughter of a potter, whilst Marui is a poor village girl. The poet praises all of these for their strength of character and numerous virtues. Only two of his heroines, Lila and Mumal, belong to the higher classes. The poet points out their vainglorious attitude in order to depict the weaknesses of high society, as will be demonstrated later.

Heavy emphasis has, of course, always been placed on a Sufi interpretation of the poetry of Shah Abd al-Latif. But it can be argued that the poet has another aim, i.e. that of depicting a social system which victimises women. According to the story given by Shah Abd al-Latif, Suhni is married to Dam against her wishes.³ As a result she never accepts him as her husband. She falls in love with Mehar, and in contrast to the accepted tradition, whereby the man is the lover who undergoes hardship, Suhni

1. I.e. Punhu.

2. Advani, op. cit., p.161.

3. Advani, op. cit., pp.89-90.

visits him every night by crossing the river. Society and her family despise her and accuse her of immorality. The poet, however, praises her courage in breaking all the rules of society, suffering the disapproval of her family in order to visit her beloved. This does not necessarily mean that Shah Abd al-Latif approves of her unfaithfulness. Indeed, the poet does not appear to hold her responsible for her act of infidelity to her husband. The marriage which has been imposed on her, without her consent, does not bind Suhni in a lasting relationship. Our poet admires the strength of this woman who is willing to sacrifice everything for love. Society, family, and friends turn against her. It seems that even nature, the river, storm and whirlpool are all waiting to punish her for her unfaithfulness. But the poet justifies her actions in the following lines, which he puts into the mouth of Suhni:

اَلَسْتُ اَرَوَّاحِنِ كِي، جَذَّهِنَ چِياؤُن،
مِثاقانِ مِهارَ سِين، لَدَيُونِ مُونِ لائُون،
سو موئي ڪيئن پانهون! جو محفوظانِ معافُ ٿيو!

When the souls were questioned in pre-eternity
My relationship
with Mehar was preordained from that day,
How could that which was
already written in my destiny be undone?¹

The poet admires Suhni's bravery and determination in face of innumerable difficulties. Her enemies are not only the people among whom she lives, but all the dangerous sea creatures who are waiting to devour her. Again Shah Latif pays tribute to her in the following words:

دَهَشَتَ دَمَ دَرِياہِ مِ، جَبِ ڪَڙڪو ڪُن ڪري،
توڏي ٽاڪُن وِجِ مِ، مٿان وِيرَ وِري،
آءُ ساهڙ! منهنجا سُرِين! پرتان پيرَ پيري،
هادي! هَتَ دَري، اونهي مان اڪارِين.

1. Advani, op. cit., p.109.

There is the terror of the overflowing river,
Where there is the thunder of the whirlpool;
Taudi (i.e. Suhni) is surrounded by devouring
creatures.

The tide is flowing high.

O Sahar! come my sweetheart! come
to me in love.

O my guide¹! help her out from the deep
waters.²

In the last line of the verse, it seems that the poet himself is intervening and praying for her ultimate safety. Once again the poet reinforces his point in the following words:

سَهْسِين سَائِرَ ٻوڙيُون، مُنڌَ ٻوڙِئو مِهراڻُ
وَهَ وَڃائِيو پاڻ، هُٽِي ڪنڌُ ڪَپَن سِين.

Hundreds of them (i.e. women) have been drowned.
But this woman has drowned the Mehran.³
By hitting its head on the bank, it (the river)
has retreated in submission.⁴

While referring to Suhni's courage in jumping into the rough stormy river and drowning in it, our poet considers even her death as a success, saying:

تَه ڪَر ڪَنءُ سُهِي؟ جِي سِيرَ نَه ڳهڙِي سُهِي،
هَتَ حَيَاتِيءَ ڏينھڙا، هُنھن تان نَه هُئي،

1. Hadi is one of the Divine names, which means guide.

2. Advani, op. cit., p.96.

3. I.e. the river Indus.

4. Shahvani, op. cit., p.332.

چڪي ته چري ڪئي، جو ڏنس ان ڏهي،
 سُهڻيءَ کي، سِيڏ چئي، وڌو قرب ڪهي،
 هُنئين هُونڌ مئي، پر ٻڏي جا پيڻا ٿيا.

If Suhni had not entered the deep waters,

how could she have been known?

She could not have lived for ever.

The *sip*¹ he milked and gave her, made

her ever crave for it.

Sayyid says love has murdered Suhni:

She would have died anyway, but drowning

increased her value.²

In the story of Nuri, the poet is pointing to the stratifications of the society in which he lives. Nuri belongs to the *muhanai*³ caste, the lowest in Sindhi society. Shah Abd al-Latif praises her, giving her the credit for her good behaviour, saying that, although she belongs to a low class, she nevertheless so impresses the king, Tamachi, that she wins him over by her virtues and he makes her his chief queen. The poet thus suggests that virtues should not necessarily be attributed only to high-class society, nor should vices be immediately associated with the lower classes. These are individual characteristics which anyone can possess, irrespective of caste or class. He comments on Nuri in the following words:

هٿين، پيرين، ارڪٽين، مِه نه مِهائِي،
 جنءِ سڳو وڃ سرنڌڙي، تنءِ راڻن ۾ راڻِي،
 اصل هئي اُن کي، آهلن ڄامائِي،
 سمي سڃاڻِي، پيڙو ٻڌس ٻانه ۾.

1. I.e. the milk which Mehargaveto Suhni, after which she fell in love with him; For details of the story of Suhni, cf. the Appendix.

2. Advani, op. cit., p.107.

3. *Muhanai* is a local term used for fishermen.

She was not a *muhani* from her
 hands, feet nor behaviour.
 Like the thread in the centre of the strings
 of the *Surindo*,² she was a queen
 among queens.
 From the beginning, her manners were
 those of royalty.
 Samo² recognised her
 and tied red thread round her wrist³

In the stories of Mumal and Rano and Lila and Chanesar, Shah Abd al-Latif brings to light the vanity and snobbery of high-class society. Mumal and Lila are both daughters and wives of Rajas. They are arrogant and self-centred and turn a blind eye to their duties. As a result, both of them lose their husbands and have only themselves to blame. Mumal blames her own neglectful nature, for not being attentive and for under-estimating her husband, who leaves her while she is asleep, having suspicions in his mind about her character. She feels regret only after losing him. As Mumal says:

شَمَّعَ هَارِينْدِي شَبَّ بِرَهَ بَاكُونِ كَدِيُونِ،
 مَوْتُ مَرَانِ تِي، مَيَدَرَا! رَاثَا! كَارِي رَبِّ،
 تَهْنَجِيءِ تَاتِ طَلَبِّ، كَانِگِ اُذَايَمِ كَاكِ جَا.

Until the rays of dawn appeared, I spent
 the night waiting and lighting candles.
 O Rana!⁵ please do come back, for God's sake!
 O Maindara!⁶

1. A stringed musical instrument of Sind, similar to the violin.
2. Tamachi.
3. A symbol of marriage, i.e. he chose to marry her.
4. Shahvani, op. cit., p.863.
5. Mumal's husband is Rano.
6. Rano's caste.

I am going to die
While yearning for your love,
I sent the crows of Kak.¹

One third of the *sur* is concerned with Mumal's longing and begging for forgiveness until she ultimately commits suicide by burning herself.²

In another story Lila is the loving wife of Chanesar, until she loses him because of her negligence and love of jewellery.³ Shah Abd al-Latif blames her for her frivolity and superficiality. When she realises her mistake, it is too late. The poet points out the miseries Lila has to undergo as a result of her foolish mistakes and he makes her pay for it with her life. While suffering the pangs of separation from her beloved husband, she regrets the past, saying:

وڌيري هُياس، چَنِيسَر جي راڄ ۾،
ڏهلين، دَمامين، نقرين، ٽي پلپل پُچياس،
ڊولي ڊيلياس، تيس ڏهاڳن ڏيه ۾!

I was the queen in the kingdom of Chanesar.
The maids, servants and doorman all greeted me;
A musical band of drums and pipes
used to welcome me, and I was always

1. A town where Mumal lived.
2. Shahvani, op. cit., pp.725–26.
Here the poet is referring to a local Hindu tradition, where the life of a woman is not worth living after her husband's death. According to the Sati system, the woman is burnt on her husband's funeral pyre. In the case of Mumal, since she has been deserted by her husband, she burns herself. When Rano realises that she has lost her life for him, he also jumps into the fire and dies.
3. Cf. the Appendix for the story of Lila and Chanesar.

entertained with special treatment.
 I was the centre of attraction among
 friends.
 Since my beloved has deserted me,
 I have become like a widow.¹

In the story of Sasui, her brothers-in-law do not approve of their brother Punhu marrying an ordinary washerwoman. They belong to a well-known family of Kech Makran. So, while Sasui is asleep, they kidnap her beloved husband Punhu. From the moment she wakes up, Sasui does not rest in peace. She leaves everything and sets out alone in search of Punhu. In the heat of summer, she crosses the desert, passes through rough mountains and forests, all on foot. Shah Abd al-Latif admires the courage of a woman who is not discouraged by rough paths, nor scared by the wild animals of the jungle. He appreciates her bravery and strength in overcoming every obstacle which stands between her and her beloved Punhu.

تَپِي ڪُنڊين ڪوھ! ڏُونگر! ڏڪوئين ڪي،
 تو جي پھڻ پَپَ جا، تہ لڱ مُنھنجا لوھ،
 ڪنھن جو ڪونھي ڏوھ، اَمَر مَوْن سين اِئن ڪيو.

What will you do with your heat,
 to the already distressed woman, O mountain?
 If you are the stone of Pub²
 My body is also of iron.
 It is no fault of anyone, except
 my own destiny.³

Moreover, Shah Abd al-Latif advises Sasui thus on how to cope in adverse circumstances:

1. Shahvani, op. cit., p.682.

2. The name of the mountain.

3. Advani, op. cit., p.190.

Moreover, Shah Abd al-Latif advises Sasui thus on how to cope in adverse circumstances:

مَهْنَدِ مُحْتَاجِي ڪَري، پُٺِيءَ پِيرُ ڪُٽِيَجِ
 ڪُٻَلِيَاڻِي! ڪِيَجِ ڏِي، حُجَ مَ ھَلَاتِيَجِ،
 پاڻا ڌار پَرِيَتُو، سَسِيِي! ساڻُ ڪُٽِيَجِ،
 اوڳِي! عَزَاذِلَ ڪِي، ويجهي تان مَرَوِيَجِ،
 نا اُميدي نِيَجِ، تہ اوڏي تئين اُميدَ ڪِي.

By taking humility as your guide, follow
 its footsteps.

O lonely¹ helpless one! never carry expectations
 while travelling to Kech.²

Sasui! take selfless love with you.

Never let Azazi³ come near you.⁴

Take hopelessness with you, then hope will come near you.

In *Sur Marui*, Shah Abd al-Latif depicts life in two distinct social milieux. On the one hand, there is that of Umar, the ruler of Sind, full of glory and riches. On the other hand, there is the life-style of the poor nomadic people of Malir, who barely have the necessities of life. The paradox brought to light by Shah Abd al-Latif in this story is that the poor are contented with what they have, whereas the rich are never satisfied and will never leave the poor to live in peace. Marui is a poor girl, brought to the palace by force, who detests everything around her. She recalls her poor friends and relatives, and portrays the picture of their simple life.

1. The adjective suggests that the poet is addressing a woman.

2. The home of Punhu, the beloved.

3. Satan, or one's baser instincts, which tempt one to sin.

4. Advani, op. cit., p.129.

وَرُسى وَطَنَ جَائِيُون، صَحْرَا سَتْرُ جَن!
 گولارا ۽ گُگريُون، اويچنَ آبائِن،
 ويَرهيا گُهْمَنَ وَلِيِن، جِهانگهي مَنجِه جَهَنگِن،
 مون کي ماروَتَرِن، سُجِ گُتايِي سِيَجَ مَر!

Blessed are the women of my country, whose
 shelter¹ is the desert.

The *golarā*² and the *gugriyūn*³ is the bedding
 of my relatives.

They are wrapped up with creepers,
 the forest dwellers move about in the forest.

My Maru⁴ gave me wasteland⁵
 as a dowry.⁶

While commenting on their contentment in poverty, Shah
 Abd al-Latif puts his words in the mouth of Marui, saying:

ڪارا ڪرائِن مِ سونُ آسان کي سُوءُ
 وَرُجِيْدِيْن سِيْن جوءُ فاقو فَرِحَتَ يائِنِيان!

1. It has implications, shelter as home, as well as protection to keep them chaste and pure.
2. Name of a wild plant—its botanical name is *Coccinea Indica*.
3. The name of a tree and its gum. Its botanical name is *Bedellium* or *Balsamodendron Roxburghus*.
4. I.e. Marui's relatives and countrymen of Malir.
5. Since Maru had nothing to give, they gave her what they owned, i.e. wasteland and desert.
6. Advani, op. cit., p.261.

We wore black thread around our wrists,
 And gold for us is the symbol of mourning
 Let there be hunger and starvation,
 but the company of my girl friends
 is a blessing for me.⁷

Frequently Shah Abd al-Latif mentions people of lowly trades and backgrounds such as weavers, spinners, washermen, potters, blacksmiths, brick-bakers, minstrels, fishermen, nomadic people, merchants and sailors. For each of them the poet has some advice, some friendly chiding for negligence and a word of encouragement and hope for the future. When talking about different lowly trades, Shah Abd al-Latif does not ignore the role of women. For example, when he refers to merchants, sailors and the dangers of the sea, the poet sees the situation from the viewpoint of the women's hopes and fears, who pray to God for the safe journey of their loved ones. The poet gives an image of the longing of wives in the following lines:

وچينءَ جان ويهي، جَرَ پَلو۽ پاڻيان،
 تَرَ پيڙا! گهر سُپرين! اُوسَہِ اِي پيئي،
 جئن وَڻجارو سين وَڪرين، سرها سِيئي،
 حُرمتَ ساڻ حبيب جي، سونگيا نه سيئي،
 پاڻهين اُوءِ پيئي، کنڊ کيڙائو آيا.

Before sunset, when I sat praying by the sea,
 the answer to my omen was, 'the ships
 will anchor on the shore and my beloved will
 reach home.'

As the merchant is happy with his merchandise,
 may God make everyone happy too.

By the blessings of the beloved,¹
 They were not held back for customs' duty.
 Ultimately the travellers to far-off lands
 came safely home.²

1. According to Advani and Shahvani, this is a reference to the prophet Muhammad.

2. Advani, op.cit., p.74.

On another occasion the poet refers to the longing of a wife whose husband has spent a long time away from her. In the verse the poet depicts the anxiety of this woman, who is eagerly waiting and thinking what she will do when her husband returns:

آيلِ! دُولِي سائُ، آچي تہ جھيڙيان،
لايَ ڏيہ گھڻان، مون سين ڪي ٿورڙا.

O mother! let my beloved return (i.e. from the journey).

I will have a quarrel with him.

And ask him why he stayed long
when he promised to come soon.¹

Shah Abd al-Latif does not neglect the lonely woman without provision; while sympathising with her, he expresses her feelings.

اُترَ ڏني اڀت، نہ مون سوڙ، نہ گبرو،
چارئي چني پوت، مون ريڙھيندي رات گئي.

When the northerly wind blew strong, I did not
have a quilt or a mattress.

While I kept pulling the four corners of my
head-cover (to keep warm), the whole night
passed away.²

Here the poet is depicting the poverty of his countrymen, but again puts his words into the mouths of women to express their feelings and bitter experience of life with no home, no warm cloth and no proper bed.

1. Shahvani, op. cit., p.250.

2. Shahvani, op. cit., p.1045.

Shah Abd al-Latif seems to dread the severe winter which will cause much discomfort for the poor. He expresses the feelings of a woman in the following words:

سَہر سِي ۽ پٺو، نہ مُون سوڙ، نہ گبرو،
نہ مُون ڪانڌ، نہ ڦوٽ ڪي، جو پڻ وڃي وٺو،
تڻين حال ڪهوا نذر جنين نجهرا.

There has been intense cold, and I have neither
quilt nor mattress.

I do not have a husband, or food,
and youth has passed away.

What will be the state of her who has
a worn-out hut in disrepair.¹

In the last two lines the poet intervenes and wonders what will happen to this woman. On another occasion, he depicts the condition of a poor woman.

ڏکي ڏمڙ ناه، بکي ڪل نہ اچهي،
اگهاڙي وهان ۽ وٺو ويچارِي وسري.

The distressed one has no anger, one who is
hungry cannot afford laughter.

The poor, naked one has forgotten all about
the wedding.²

1. Shahvani, op. cit., pp.1044-5.

2. Ibid., p.426.

The role of women with particular reference to *Sur Marui*

In order to highlight the role of women as depicted in the poetry of Shah Abd al-Latif, it seems worthwhile to analyse one of the folk stories in some detail and look at its theme and content from different angles.

The story of Marui which is one of the most popular folk-stories of Sind has been used by several poets as their theme. As already mentioned, before Shah Abd al-Latif Shah Abd al-Karim of Bulri and Shah Inayat Rizvi used this theme for their Sufi poetry. Shah Abd al-Latif, like his predecessors, takes this story for the longest *sur* in the whole *Risalo*. This is a very significant point since it indicates that the poet puts special emphasis on this *sur*. The *Risalo* edited by Gurbukhshani has thirty pages devoted to Marui,¹ whereas in Shahvani's² edition, there are ninety pages.

Before embarking on an analysis of Sur Marui, it seems appropriate to give a brief account of the story.

There lived in Thar a shepherd called Palno with his wife Mado'i and a beautiful daughter Marui. The shepherd employed a young man Phog to assist him with work on the farm. When Marui grew up to be a young girl of marriageable age, Phog asked her father for her hand. Palno rejected his proposal because he had already arranged for her to marry a relative called Khetsin. Phog, as a rejected lover, thought of revenge. He went to king Umar and praised Marui's beauty in such words that Umar was tempted to win her himself.

1. Gurbukhshani, op. cit., pp.550-79.

The reason why Gurbukhshani's *Risalo* has only thirty pages is because he discarded some verses on the grounds that he did not consider them as authentic. Moreover, his version of the *Risalo* has wider and longer pages, which contain more verses than the *Risalo* edited by Shahvani

2. Shahvani, op. cit., pp.767-852.

Umar disguised himself, and in the company of Phog, rode on a camel back to Malir. According to the tradition of the village, Marui was found among other girls, fetching water from the well for household consumption. When Phog pointed towards Marui to tell the king who she was, Umar went forward pretending to be a thirsty traveller, and asked Marui to give him some water to drink. As she went closer to give him water, he seized her and carried on a swift camel towards his palace.

In his palace, he imprisoned her and tried to persuade her to marry him and become queen. Marui rejected every offer, including gold, silver, jewellery, fine clothes, disliked the palace life of a queen and was determined to go back and join her people, Maru. When Umar saw that Marui was crying day and night, neither eating, washing nor changing her clothes, he realised that she would never give up. He therefore decided to set her free. He called some of her people and asked them to take her back to Malir.

She went with them but her fiancé Khetsin, had become suspicious of Marui's character while she was in the palace, and used to taunt her for this. When king Umar heard this, he sent his force against the Maru saying that Khetsin was not only accusing Marui, but casting doubts on Umar's good name.

Marui intervened and blamed the king, saying that if he had not kept her in the palace she would not have acquired a bad name. When Umar had been put to shame by her, he told Marui's relatives that he was ready to go through any test to prove Marui's purity and innocence. But Marui insisted that she would go through the test to remove doubt from Khetsin's mind. Thus an iron rod was put in the fire; when it was red-hot, Marui held it in her hands, but she was not burnt at all. Umar did the same thing, and was not hurt either. Thus both of them were proved not guilty; from that time onwards Marui lived happily with her husband Khetsin.¹

1. Advani, op. cit., pp.253-4.

According to Mirza Qalech Beg, Khetsin went to Umarkot, (the fort of Umar) and secretly planned with Marui to rescue her. With other ladies of the palace Marui arranged to visit the tomb of a holy man, and from there she escaped with Khetsin to Malir. It is not, however, clear where Mirza Qalech Beg has found such details. According to the same scholar, the significant features of the story are Marui's love for her country, her husband's jealousy, her honesty and sincerity, Umar's tyranny and oppression, the way of life of rural people, and her longing for her country.¹

The main interpretation of this sur given by Mirza Qalech Beg is a Sufi one. In his view Marui represents the true seeker or lover of God, Umar stands for tyrants and the powerful men in this world, and Umarkot is suggestive of this world, which is a prison for seekers and religious people. Malir is the original home of the soul or the next world. The pleasures of the countryside and the beauty of nature suggest the peace and rejoicing of the next world, whereas the jewellery and expensive clothes refer to worldly showiness and manifestation.²

Gurbukhshani also puts forward a Sufi interpretation for this story.³ He suggests that with Marui, Shah Abd al-Latif refers to the original country (homeland) of a human being. Our whole universe was in a state of non-existence but God desired to reveal the treasure of his essence and attributes; so he said 'to be' and 'it became'. God created human souls, took from them a promise of faithfulness, and left them in the world of spirits. In Gurbukhshani's view, when the poet talks about Marui being free and enjoying herself in the company of her girl friends and Khetsin, her fiancée, he is referring to souls who are free like birds, to fly and enjoy themselves by being in love with God and praying to Him. When the souls were asked to leave that celestial world, they put on the clothing of a body, left heaven and came to live on earth. Just as this world is a prison to the *salik*, Marui's body is

1. Mirza, op. cit., pp.169–70.

2. Ibid., p.170.

3. Gurbukhshani, op. cit., pp.687–8.

in bondage in Umarkot, the fort, but her soul is always longing for Malir; thus the soul of a spiritually enlightened person finds its body a prison and is always shedding tears for its eternal home. Man's base nature is also tempting his higher soul to create a barrier between God and man but the soul of the virtuous is never defiled by such bribes. Therefore God sends a spiritual man for his guidance, for deliverance, like a messenger came from Malir to rescue Marui.¹

Nevertheless Gurbukhshani can view the character of Marui from another angle. He writes,

Marui is a humble village girl. She is the image of patriotism and devotion to her country. The *duth*, *daunra* (caper fruit), *golara* and *gugriyun*, *pharah* and *laniyun*, *khara* and *khabyarun*² are in her eyes blessings from heaven.³

Advani's Sufi interpretation⁴ is almost identical to that of Gurbukhshani. Malir refers to homeland (*watan*) and countrymen. Souls are imprisoned in this world because of greed and temptation. Umar stands for the lower soul (*nafs*), whose aim is to mislead the seeker to the wrong road. But the true seekers like Marui, being aware of the tactics of the lower soul (*nafs*) reject every offer. As a result, the *nafs* gives up bothering such persons. Thus Marui symbolises the pure soul, who is always longing to go to her original home, until God's grace descends on the seeker to set him or her free. Like the messenger who came for Marui to rescue her and take her back to Malir, in a similar manner a *murshid* comes to the aid of a *salik* to guide him back to the highest heaven, i.e. *Arsh*, where other wise people already reside.

1. Ibid
2. Different types of wildly grown grass, bushes, fruit and its blossom, eaten by poor people.
3. Advani, op. cit., p.254.
4. Gurbukhshani, op. cit., p.50.

The true lovers reach their original home and become one with their heavenly beloved (God).¹ This interpretation is shared, broadly speaking, by Shahvani.²

The story does fit in certain ways a Sufi interpretation but it can be argued that various other themes are interwoven, consciously or subconsciously in *Sur Marui*; more especially a 'feminist' aspect and a patriotic feeling may be discerned at times. There is certainly a possibility, anyway, that Shah Abd al-Latif wishes to express the feelings of women through the words of Marui, and to stress a more active role for women. Marui, who is kept chained in Umarnkot, the fort of Umar, could indeed represent any or every woman of Sind who is forced to live within the confinement of four walls. Throughout the *sur*, it is significant that although Umar is the king, he remains in the background. It is usually Marui who is heard, either arguing with him, pleading with him or upbraiding him for his cruelty and injustice. Most of Umar's actions are suggested, rather than explicitly described, in Marui's responses to him. Above all, there is the paradox that the woman in prison is courageous enough to reject all temptations offered to her by the powerful king who is at liberty.

Shah Abd al-Latif seems to suggest through Marui that country life is preferable to life in the town, since in the village women can enjoy more freedom. This is a view advanced by Tirathdas Hotchand who rightly points out that in the rural areas of Sind, in former times, women were much freer to participate in agriculture and animal husbandry, and that they were thus able to maintain their independence and identity in society.³

Tirathdas Hotchand does, however, go a little too far when he suggests that Shah Abd al-Latif is speaking of a matriarchal society. Nevertheless, he is one of the few scholars who has laid some emphasis on a neglected aspect of the work of Shah Abd al-Latif.

1. Advani, op. cit., p.254.

2. Shahvani, op. cit., pp.763-66.

3. Hotchand, Tirathdas, *Pakistan's Immortal Poet: Shah Abd al-Latif*. Hyderabad Sind, 1962, pp.45-46.

Let us look more closely at some evidence. Marui is in prison, unhappy and restless, a symbol perhaps of the veiled imprisonment of urban women in Shah Abd al-Latif's time. She yearns for the life of her village where the women move around freely.

وَرُسي وَطَنَ جَائِيُون، صَحْرَا سَتْرُ جِن!

Blessed are the women of my country
Whose shelter and protection is the desert.¹

Marui is not daunted by setbacks and diversity. She is resolute in her struggle, even though she has no news of her family and no help has been forthcoming from them. On one occasion she exclaims about her family in the following terms:—

الا! اولي آئين، جي نياپا نين!
آءُ اُنين جي آهيان، توڙي مون نه مڃين،
مَسُ مُهنجي هٿ ۾ ڪاغذ ڪي آئين!
لُڙڪَ نه لَکڻ ڏين، ڪريو پَوَن قلمر تي.

O God! bring the camelman, who can
take my message (to them).
I belong to them, whether they accept me or not
The ink is in my hand, can anyone bring me
paper.
The tears that keep falling on my pen are
preventing me from writing.²

1. Shahvani, op. cit., p.783.

2. Gurbukhshani, op. cit., p.552.

Though a simple village girl, Shah Abd al-Latif makes the suggestion here that Marui wants to write to her family, although tears and lack of paper prevent her from doing so.¹

Not all women are as restless and discontented as Marui herself. Indeed, she is surprised at the apparent contentment of other women who are with her in the foreign confinement:-

بَنَدِي بِثَا قَرَار، اَسِين لَوِچُون لَوَه مَر،
مَتِي تَن تَرَار، سَدَا سَانِيَرَن جِي.

The other prisoners are at peace
But we are restless in iron (chains)
Because the guardian's sword is always
hanging over us.²

By putting these words into the mouth of Marui, the poet could be interpreted as expressing surprise at women who are submissive and who though in chains appear content with their lot. Shah Abd al-Latif makes Marui act as a rebel who complains about the bondage in which women are kept. Umar symbolises those men who keep their women locked up behind closed doors. The sword may be interpreted as the threat of male domination which constantly hangs over women, guarding and threatening them at the same time. Some women accept this as their destiny; others, like Marui, resent and resist it. Shah Abd al-Latif seems to sympathise with Marui when he offers her these words of consolation :-

مَكِين رَوُءِ مَرَرُؤُ كِين، مَرَكِين هَنجُون هَارِ،
جَهَرَا اچَن دِينَهَرَا، تَهَرَا وِينِي گَهَارِ،

1. Schimmel, A.M., *Pain and Grace*, Leiden, 1976, p.172. Again a topos.

2. Gurbukhshani, op. cit., p.557.

دُڪَن پٺيان سُڪڙا، سِگها ٿين، سَنگهارِ،
 لَتا لوهر، لَطِيفُ چي، پَرُوڙِج، پَهَنوَارِ!
 پيڙيون نيئي ٻار، تو تان بَندُ بدا ٿئو.

Do not cry nor wail nor shed tears
 Whatever your days may bring you,
 endure them
 O Sanghar!¹ after the sorrows, soon
 will come the comfort.
 O Panwahr!¹ understand this, says Latif
 Your bars have been lifted
 Break your chains, your confinement
 will soon be over.²

جي هِت هُئي مارئي، تہ لَدِيمَ ڪَر ڪيئاسِ،
 اَرْداسُئُمَ عُمَرُ کي، ويجهو ٿي وٽاسِ،
 جي نہ ڇڏيائين، ڪِ جَهلِيائين، تہ پَنهنجو اَنگُ آجيانسِ،
 لاهي لوہ، لطيف چي، هتان هُنَدَ هِلاَنسِ،
 موکي مليرِ سامُهين، وٺي ٻانه وِجانسِ،
 رَهبرُ ٿي، رِٽهِيانَسِ، سُنهارِي ساڻِيہَ ڏي.

If Marui were here, I would comfort her.
 I would approach Umar and beg for her freedom.
 If he did not free her,
 then I would offer myself instead.
 After releasing her from the prison
 says Latif,

1. Both these titles refer to Marui herself.

2. Gurbukhshani, op. cit., p.578.

I would take her by the hand
 and lead her towards Malir.
 Becoming her guide, I would
 slowly walk her towards her
 blessed country.¹

Turning now to another possible interpretation of *Sur Marui*, it is interesting to speculate on the degree to which the question of patriotism plays a part in this *sur*. Ajvani rightly points out that there has been too much emphasis in the past on Sufi elements in Shah Abd al-Latif's poetry, at the expense of another dominant motif which he calls *Sindhiyyat* or Sindhi-ness.² While commenting on the poetry of Shah Abd al-Latif Ajvani says:

Shah was really a great patriot; one has only to read *Sur Marui* to know what love he bore for the land of his birth.³

Other scholars, such as Pir Husam al-Din Rashidi,⁴ in his articles, and Muhammad Ibrahim Joyo⁵ and others⁶ have made passing remarks on Shah Abd al-Latif's patriotic feelings about Sind, expressed in the *Risalo*. G.M. Sayyid believes that through *Sur Marui* Shah Abd al-Latif has a special message of patriotism for the people of Sind. According to this view, in this *sur* one finds feelings of love for the land and the people, an appreciation of their traditions, and pride in their simple way of life. The poet makes Marui reject all the luxuries offered to her by an unjust ruler,

1. Gurbukhshani, op. cit., p.576.

2. Ajvani, op. cit., p.67.

3. Ibid., p.87.

4. Rashidi Pir Husam al-Din, *Latif Salgrah Makhzan*, Hyderabad Sind, 1961, No.3.

5. Joyo Muhammad Ibrahim, *Shah Sachal Sami*, Hyderabad Sind, 1978, p.55.

6. E.g. Badavi Lutfallah, '*Bhitaije Shi'rja Tarikhi Waqi'a*', Nain Zindagi, September, 1956, p.22.

Umar. In spite of her being a simple country girl, like a patriot she has courage and is determined never to submit even under great pressure from the king. Sayyid suggests that Shah Abd al-Latif refers to Malir as an independent state and Umarkot (the fort of Umar) as a place of servitude; thus Marui prefers the poverty of Malir to the luxury of Umarkot. Marui represents the people of Sind who pray for rain in Malir, and hope for the prosperity of Maru and Malir.¹

Sayyid is right to lay stress on the patriotism of Shah Abd al-Latif, but it seems that there is a need for a slight shift of emphasis. From the historical records of Sind, it is clear that Sind has been attacked and trampled down, and captured and ruled by foreign powers. A more likely interpretation from a close reading of *Sur Marui* is that Shah Abd al-Latif is using Marui to represent Sind itself, rather than its people.

The poet makes Marui speak of her anxiety and restlessness in prison. Marui surely represents Sind, and Maru, her country folk, are the symbol of the people of Sind. Marui is made by the poet to express her surprise at her own people's negligence. When Marui is captured and brought to Umarkot, none of her people come to rescue her. This quite upsets Marui because of their passive attitude. It seems here that Shah Abd al-Latif is referring to the passivity of the Sindhi people under oppression, and he is making Sind speak through Marui. The whole *sur* is full of Marui's restlessness in chains, and an expression of her regret that Maru never came to rescue her.

It is an evocative symbol that Shah Abd al-Latif personifies Sind as a woman, who takes various forms including that of a loving mother, a faithful wife and a devoted and caring daughter. Sind, through the work of Shah Abd al-Latif, is seen to be always concerned with the well-being of her loved ones. Marui loves Maru and Malir unconditionally. Marui, like a devoted and sincere woman, faithful in every relationship, loves Malir in spite of its lack of food, discomfort and poverty. She adores and sheds tears of blood for her Maru, irrespective of their faults.

1. Sayyid, G.M., *Paigham Latif*, Hyderabad Sind, 1953, pp.249-55.

The following verses taken from *Sur Marui* are but a selection of many such lines which evoke Marui's longing and love of her people.¹

اَرَمَ هَذِهِ اَوْدِيَانِ، پَتُولَا، پَتَ جِيرَ،
 بَانْدُوڻَا بِنَ دِيَانِ، اَرَعِجَ ۽ اَعْنَبِيرَ،
 مَارُوَ سِينَ شَلَ مَاڻِيَانِ، كَتِيُونُ جَهَرِيُونُ كِيرَا!
 اَنَدَرِ اُجَ اُكِي، مُنْكِ پَرِيءَ پَهَنوَارَ جِي.

I will never wear fine .woollen clothes, nor a
 colourful silken dress
 Damn the printed material, silk and
 blue fine fabrics.
 May I wear Khathi,² pure like milk
 with my Maru,
 I have thirst and longing within me, for my
 beloved shepherd.³

The poet's love for Sind, its people, language and countryside is unconditional. The picture he paints is lyrical and passionate, idealistic and eloquent:⁴

وَر سِي وَطَنَ جَائِيُونِ، صَحْرَا سَتَرُ جَنِ!
 گُولَاڙَا ۽ گُگَرِيُونِ، او چِڻ اباڻنِ،
 وِزَرِيَا گَهْمَنَ وَلِيِنِ، جِهَانْگِي مَنجِهَ جِهَنگَنِ،
 مُنْڪِي مَارُوڙَرِنِ، سَجَ گُڻَاڻِي سِيَجَ ۾!

1. Gurbukhshani, op. cit., p.554.
2. A coarse raw woolen blanket worn as a shawl in winter by poor herdsmen and women.
3. I.e. Maru and Khether finance.
4. Shahvani, op. cit., p.783.

Blessed are the women of my country,
 Whose shelter and protection is the desert.
 Wild trees (of the desert) are their cover,
 The residents of the jungle use creepers as their
 clothing.
 My parents (Maru) gave me the desert for my
 dowry.

In another place he says:¹

پَلَرُ پِيٺُ، اَوِجُ اُنَ، جَنِ جا پيرَ مَٽي پَتَ پاڪَ،
 وَهٽُ وَراڪن مِ اُنَ جِي اَجوڪي اوطاق،
 پاڻُ نه پَسَن پاڻُ کي، ويچارا بي باڪَ،
 عمر! ووءُ نه عاقَ، ڏکڻا جَمَ ڏکوئين!

Their feet are on clear ground.
 They drink rainwater, and wear hand-woven
 clothes.
 They live under the boughs of the trees, so there
 is no danger of destruction or harm to their
 residence.
 They are poor, but fearless and unbashful people.
 O Umar! They are not unruly – why are you
 hurting those who are already suffering.

Perhaps the passage in *Sur Marui* which most lends itself to a patriotic interpretation is Marui's request to Umar to do her one last favour; namely that before she breathes her last, he should send her back to Malir:

1. Ibid.

واجهائي وطنَ كي، ساري ڏيان ساهُ،
 بُتُ مُنهنجو بَندَ ۾ قيد مَ ڪريجاه،
 پرڏيهيائي پريءَ ري، ڌار مَ ڌريجاه،
 تڏي وسائجاه تَرَن جي، مِتي مُئيءَ مٿاه،
 جي پويون ٿي پساه، ته نجاه مَرّه مَليرَ ڏي.

It I expire while longing for my country
 Do not imprison my body
 Do not withhold the stranger (Marui)
 from her loved ones.
 Cover me with the cold mud of Thar,
 When I am about to breathe my last,
 take my corpse to Malir.¹

A little later she says:²

واجهائي وطنَ كي، آئون جي هِت مُياسِ،
 گور مُنهنجي سومرا، ڪڇ پهنوارَن پاس،
 ڏج ڏاڏائين ڏيه جي، منجها وَلَرَن واسُ،
 مُيائي جياس، جي وڃي مَرّه مَليرَ ڏي.

If I expire while longing for my country
 O Sumra! let my grave be with my countrymen
 Burn the bushes of my grandparents' home
 for incense
 I will live again even after my death,
 if my body goes to Malir.

1. Gurbukhshani, op. cit., p.561.

2. Ibid., p.562.

In one of her speeches on the anniversary of Shah Abd al-Latif, Khadija Daudpota called him the 'poet of heroines'. She went on to say that much of the *Risalo* reveals the great status Shah Abd al-Latif accorded to women and that he was aware of their admirable characteristics, such as selflessness, patience and determinations.¹

The preceding discussion in this chapter has, it is hoped, at least criticised an exclusively Sufi interpretation of the *Risalo* and suggested that other strands may be discerned in it.

1. Daudpoto, Khadija, 'Bhitai, Surmiunjo Shair', *NainZindagi*, January 1960, pp.8-11.

CHAPTER 3

SHAH ABD AL-LATIF AND HINDU THOUGHT WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO YOGIS

GENERAL INTRODUCTION.

Inevitably, there has been considerable interchange of ideas between Hindus and Muslims in the sub-continent over the centuries. In northern and central India, from the fourteenth century onwards, there were many examples of poets who did not classify themselves as Hindus or Muslims. They were essentially non-sectarian, they owed a great deal to Vedantic monism and their belief in monotheism brought them closer to Islam than to traditional Hinduism.¹

According to Gulraj,² cordial relations had been created between Muslims and Hindus by pioneer figures such as Kabir³ and Nanak.⁴ Both these men attracted followers from both religious communities and Nanak visited northern Sind, preaching love, unity and peace. Distinctions between the two faiths were of course blurred, especially at the popular level, and many Hindus, both illiterate and educated, were called 'Sufis by religion' and were associated with Sufi centres in Sind.⁵ It was in such an environment that Shah Abd al-Latif was brought up.

1. Vaudeville, C., *Kabir*, Oxford, 1974, p.97.
2. Gulraj, J.P., *Sind and its Sufis*, Karachi, 1979, pp.79-86.
3. Kabir (1440-1518) was an Indian mystic and poet who attempted to reconcile Hindu and Muslim thought, preaching the fundamental unity of all religions and all men. Cf. *The New Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Chicago, 1974, vol.V, p.651, art.: "Kabir".
4. Nanak (1469-1539) was the first *guru* of the Sikhs. His teachings stressed salvation through meditation on the divine name. *The New Encyclopaedia Britannica*, vol.VII, p.178, art: 'Nanak.'
5. Gulraj, op.cit., pp.81-4.

The contact which Shah Abd al-Latif made with yogis is discussed at length later in this chapter. It is difficult, however, to pinpoint with certainty any specific influence which traditional Hinduism may have exerted on Shah Abd al-Latif. It is not even clear whether or not he had studied Hindu scriptures, although it can be argued from his work that he did have some knowledge of them.

A great deal of material has already been produced on this topic. Partisan scholars from both sides have found in the poetry of Shah Abd al-Latif evidence to support their views, but frequently, in their polemical zeal, they have carried their arguments too far. What now follows, therefore, are a few tentative points which, it is hoped, present a more balanced view in the continuing debate on the possible areas of Hindu influence in the work of Shah Abd al-Latif. Certainly, his poetry has long been enjoyed by Hindus and Muslims alike.

In his introduction to the *Risalo*,¹ Gurbukhshani devotes a section exclusively to the relationship between Vedantic philosophy and Sufism, suggesting that Shah Abd al-Latif followed the same traditions in his poetry. In order to ascertain the possible links between Vedantic philosophy and the poetry of Shah Abd al-Latif, a brief outline of Vedanta would seem appropriate at this stage.

Vedanta maybe divided into various important sub-systems: Advaita (monism or non-dualism), Visistadvaita (qualified non-dualism) and Dvaita (dualism).² The chief exponent of Advaita was Shankara, who believed in only one reality, a single unity underlying everything. As for Visistadvaita, Ramanuja was its proponent. He emphasised union rather than unity. The third system, Dvaita, was propagated by Madhva, for whom multiplicity formed the basis of the universe.

In the poetry of Shah Abd al-Latif there would appear to be a number of resemblances with the first two systems, i.e. Advaita and Visistadvaita.

1. Gurbukhshani, op. cit., pp.29-36.

2. Swami Chidbhananda, Bhagavad Gita, Madras, 1970, pp.50.52.

. According to Shankara, the most important propounder of Advaita or a non-dualistic philosophy, Reality is the only one. It is Existence–Knowledge–Infinite Bliss and has intrinsic power to manifest itself as the *Jagat* (universe) and *Jiva* (soul). It is *Saguna Brahman* (conditional Reality) when in the state of omnipotence and omnipresence. But it is called *Nirguna* (Absolute Reality) when it is static. It is unqualified, unconditional and without attributes. In this system the unification of the Absolute and the Self is complete, no distinction is made between the soul and the universe or God. Everything merges into one single unit, i.e. One.¹

In the work of Shah Abd al-Latif one does find similarities at times between his views and Shankara's philosophy. There are a number of verses where no distinction is made between God, universe and the soul, all things seem to be One, though in appearance they are different. He expresses his amazement at the Unity of Being in the following words:²

ڪوڙين ڪاڀائون تنهنجون، لکين لک هزار،
جيءُ سڀ ڪنهن جي سين، ڏرسن ڌارو ڌار،
پر ٻي تنهنجا پار، ڪهڙا چئي ڪئن چئان.

There are millions and hundreds of thousands of
your appearances.
And each glimpse seems to be different from the
other.
O my beloved! in what and how many ways shall
I count them?

On another occasion he says:

1. Lott, Eric, *Vedantic Approach to God*, London, 1980, pp.121–9. Cf. Swami, op. cit., pp.52–3.
2. Advani, op. cit., p.12.

پَاٹھِیْن جَلِّ جَلَالُہُ، پَاٹھِیْن جَانِ جَمَالُ،
 پَاٹھِیْن صُوْرَتِ پَرِیْنِ جِی، پَاٹھِیْن جُسْنِ کَمَالُ،
 پَاٹھِیْن پِیْر مُرِیْدِ تَتِی، پَاٹھِیْن پَاں خِیَالُ،
 سَب سِیُوْرِیْ حَالُ، مَنجھائی معلومُ تَتِی.

Himself is worthy of grandeur of prestige
 Himself is the essence of beauty
 Himself is in the form of the Beloved
 Himself is the Perfect Beauty
 Himself is the *murshid* and *murid*
 Himself is the Idea (from which the forms emerge)
 He is capable of comprehension from within.¹

Both Shankara and Shah Abd al-Latif believe in intrinsic unity between God and the Universe, but there are certain obstacles such as ignorance, pride and the ego which separate God and the human soul. There are, however, dissimilarities between Advaita and the view of the world found in the poetry of Shah Abd al-Latif. For Shah Abd al-Latif, the universe and the soul are not mere illusions but they have existence in God. For Shankara, on the other hand, the universe is an illusion (*maya*) and only God exists. Shankara gives the example of a rope which seems erroneously like a snake. In a similar way, the universe which is apparently real, is in reality an illusion, thus reducing human individuality to a mere phantom.² If this were true for Shah Abd al-Latif, the burning desire of the soul for union with God and the emphasis on individual human struggle would be futile and unnecessary.

On the other hand, according to Visistadvaita, nothing exists except God. The universe is the body of God and souls (*jivas*) exist as innumerable life-cells in that cosmic body. Individual souls are inseparable from God. Realisation of this is attained only

1. Advani, op. cit., p.4.

2. Feuerstein, G., *Bhagavad Gita*, Oxford, 1974, p.74.

through intuitive knowledge when the soul (*jiva*) realises that God (*Param'atman*) is the whole and that it (the soul) is just a minute part of that whole. After this realisation the soul struggles for the attainment of *mukti*: release from the world. By attaining *mukti*, the soul is re-united with God.¹

For Ramanuja:

the creative will of God is the sole cause of the universe, and for his creative act God is dependent on nothing but his own Will and Being. This creative act of God could be called self-expression or self-emancipation.²

Turning to Shah Abd al-Latif's poetry, Ramanuja's ideas are also echoed in a number of verses. For Shah Abd al-Latif everything in the world works in a certain way because it is the will of God. Human beings come from God and will go back to God. As waves are inseparable from the sea which is their source, so too the existence of souls is impossible without their source which is God. Shah Abd al-Latif says:

لَهَرِنَ لَکَ لِبَاسَ، پاڻِي پَسَنُ هِيڪَڙَو،
 اونهي تنهن عميق جي، واري ڇڏو ماس،
 جتِ ناهِ نهايتِ نينهن جي، ڪوئِ اتِ پنهنجي ڪاس،
 تڙن جي تلاش، لاهِ ته لالَن لڳ تئين.

The waves seem to be in thousands
 But the water you see is just One
 Do not worry about the depth of the sea
 Nor should that thought bother you.

1. Swami, op. cit., pp.51-2.
2. Lott, Eric, *God and the Universe in the Vedantic Theology of Ramanuja*, Madras 1976, pp.166-7.

Where there is no limit to love
 One has to give up every other desire
 One can only come closer to the beloved
 When one gives up looking for the seashore.¹

On another occasion he writes:

پتاڏو سو سڏ، وڙ وائيءَ جو جي لَھين،
 هُئا اڳهر گڏ، ٻڌڻ م ٻه ٿيا.

The echo and the call are the same
 If only you could know the secret of it
 They are together, but become two when one hears
 them.¹

The above verses seem to bring Shah Abd al-Latif more close to the position of Ramanuja, who sees human souls as part of God but not identical with God.

Each soul is an *amsa* of the body of Brahman
 and is a personal being, possessing a measure
 of freedom.³

There are also certain obvious similarities of ideas between the *Gita* and the poetry of Shah Abd al-Latif, although to postulate a direct influence would be a difficult hypothesis to prove. To take a few examples to illustrate this, Shah Abd al-Latif expresses similar views to those in the *Gita* on the subject of God's being within oneself:-

1. Advani, op. cit., p. 118.
2. Ibid.
3. Farquhar, J.N., 'The Historical Position of Ramananda', *The Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, Part III, 1922, p. 375.

جو تون ڏورئين ڏور، سو سدا آهي ساڻ تو،
 لالَن لَئِ لَطِيفُ چَئي، مَنجَهي ٿي مَعذُورِ
 منجهان پَنُن پَرُوڙَ، تو مَنجَھ آھس تَڪِيو.

For whom are you looking in the distance?
 He is always residing within you.
 For the sweetheart, says Latif,
 (Meditate), see within yourself
 Only from within can you know,
 As His resting-place is within you.¹

Turning now to the Gita we read:—

That is without and within all beings, unmoving
 and yet moving. That cannot be known because
 of (its) subtleness. That is far-standing and yet
 near.²

Again, while referring to the Unity of Being, Shah Abd al-Latif emphasises the importance of the letter *alif*, which as it is the first letter of the alphabet symbolises the beginning of everything, God :—³

اڪر پڙھ اَلَفَ جو، وَرَقَ سَپِ وسار،
 اَنڌرُ تون اُجار، پَنا پڙھندين ڪيترا!

Just read the letter A (*alif*) and forget the
 rest of the pages

You have only to keep your inner self pure
 There is no need to read more pages.

It is a wellknown fact that the letter '*alif*' has great importance in Sufism, nevertheless references to this letter are also found in other un-Islamic sources as well.

1. Advani, op. cit., p.133.

2. Feuerstein, op. cit., p.76.

3. Advani, op. cit., p.33.

A similar view is expressed in the *Gita* on the letter A but here it is God Himself who is speaking:—

Of letters I am the letter A and of word—com-
pounds I am the dual. I am verily like inexhaustible
Time. I am the Dispenser facing everywhere.¹

SHAH ABD AL-LATIF AND YOGIS

The various editors of Shah Abd al-Latif's poetry mention that the poet spent three years of his life with yogis and they then indicate the two *surs* of the *Risalo*, *Sur Khahori* and *Sur Ramkali*, which discuss the subject of yogis.² The Hindu scholar Advani adds that Shah Abd al-Latif derived positive benefit from his contact and experiences with the yogis. He praises the simplicity, selflessness and asceticism of the yogis.³ Gurbukhshani talks about Shah Abd al-Latif's travels with the yogis, but it is difficult to assess what his view on this might have been since he died before completing the last part of the *Risalo* which includes the two *surs* on yogis.⁴

Shahvani, on the other hand, who is a Muslim scholar, is willing to admit that Shah Abd al-Latif spent time with the yogis, and that even after he had left them, he always remembered them and mentioned them in laudatory terms in the two *surs* in the *Risalo*.¹ Shahvani admits that from his poetry it is clear that Shah Abd al-Latif loves and longs for the yogis. Shah Abd al-Latif, according to Shahvani, admires the yogis' existence which transcends caste and creed, and he praises the yogis for their ascetic practices and selfless lives. Shahvani is, however, at pains to

1. Swami, op. cit., p.565.
2. Gurbukhshani, H.M., *Shah jo Risalo*, Hyderabad Sind, 1979, 3 vols.
Advani, Kalyan, *Shah jo Risalo*, Karachi, 1976.
Shahvani, G.M., *Shah jo Risalo*, Hyderabad Sind, 1950.
Mirza Qalech Beg, *Shah Abd al-Latif Bhitai*, Hyderabad Sind, 1910.
3. Op. cit., p.387. In his introductory note on *Sur Ramkali*, Advani mentions different types of yogis, but does not comment on their origins and customs.
4. Op. cit., p.13.

point out that Shah Abd al-Latif 'had the heart of a Muslim who could not get satisfaction by worshipping potsherd and bricks'.

Controversy has raged fiercely between Muslim and Hindu scholars over the whole issue of Shah Abd al-Latif and Hindu yogi influence. On the Muslim side, Mirza Qalech Beg is typical of the traditional approach. Whilst he admits that Shah Abd al-Latif travelled around with yogis visiting some Hindu holy places and that he did actually write the two *surs* mentioned above, he goes on to say that Shah Abd al-Latif did not approve of the practices of the yogis which he saw at first hand and that after arguing with them he left them:

The sole purpose of Shah Abd al-Latif in wearing the clothes of *faqirs* and in travelling with them was to find out their religious ideas and customs. He visited Nani a second time, but he did not observe the required rites properly. He had a disagreement with them and left.²

Din Muhammad Wafai throws some light on the possible reasons for Shah Abd al-Latif's break with the yogis, after having spent three years with them. He suggests that Shah Abd al-Latif may well have argued with them on the question of idol worship and about certain rites which had to be performed at Hindu holy places.³ He then quotes Mushtaq Mutaalvi as follows:—

He (Shah Abd al-Latif) went to see the Hindu shrine of Nani, where with his Sufi miracles (*karamat*) he insulted and degraded the *faqirs* so as to make them realise their mistake. Ignorance being their innate nature, they (the yogis) planned to

1. Op.cit., pp.1099–1100.
2. Mirza Qalech Beg, *Ahwal Shah Abd al-Latif Bhitai*, p.20. Earlier, with reference to Nani, the author discusses the practices at that place and reports that when Hindu *faqirs* visit it, they shave their beards and heads, and 'it is said that for three days their faces turn black, no matter how fair their faces may be'. Ibid., pp.15–17.
3. Wafai Din Muhammad, *Lutf Latif*, Karachi, 1951, pp.55–9.

hurt him. When he realised this, he dived into the earth and came out in his own country.¹

The author concludes that inspite of spending time in the company of yogis, Shah Abd al-Latif managed to remain a true Muslim.

In response to such a negative attitude on the part of Muslim scholars such as Mirza Qalech Beg, Hindu writers such as Ajvani and Jotvani have been vigorous in defence of their own position and they resent the fact that Sorley, Baloch and Brohi call the poet 'a true Muslim'.

Ajvani criticises Mirza Qalech Beg for distorting the truth and suggests that the reason why Shah Abd al-Latif's poetry has always been so popular with Hindus is because it reflects the influence of Vedantic and yogi thought on the poet. He goes on to say :-

'A man who could don the garb of Hindu Jogis, wander with them for years, make pilgrimages to Hinglaj, Dwarka and other sacred places of the Hindus, a man who broke, without the slightest compunction, the Islamic injunction against Sama' or dance-music, and died tasting the pleasure of that dance-music, a man who went out of his way, in that era of bigotry, to pull out from a crowd of fanatic Muslims a poor Hindu whom they were proceeding to convert forcibly to Islam, could hardly be regarded as a Muslim.'²

Ajvani stresses that Shah Abd al-Latif retained his respect and affection for the yogis, even after he had argued with some of them and left them. He then sums up as follows:-

1. Ibid., p.59. The same author also mentions that the yogis on the eight-day journey from Karachi to Chandercoap do not brush their teeth or wash throughout. He comments that it is not surprising that Shah Abd al-Latif should have disliked this. Ibid., p.60.
2. Ajvani, op. cit., pp.66 and 81.

"All the roughness, irregularities and oddities he may have derived by growing up in the company of fanatic Syeds and Fakirs were rounded off and polished by his initiation into Yoga Bhakti and Vedant, the traditional philosophy and all-embracing mysticism which India had treasured for thousands of years. It is problematic whether Shah would have risen to full stature as the poet of Sind and a true mystic, if he had not travelled over the whole of greater Sind and spent at least three precious years in the company of Hindu Sanyasis and Jogis and dressed, lived and worshipped like them and become one of them."

Such judgements as these reflect, of course, Ajvani's pro-Hindu bias.

The argument was continued by Baloch and Jotvani. The Muslim scholar, Baloch, suggests in his various articles that the main influences on Shah Abd al-Latif were those of the Qur'an, *hadis* and Persian poetry, and he totally ignores the question of Hindu inspiration, including the issue of Shah Abd al-Latif and the yogis. The Hindu writer Jotvani vigorously refutes and ridicules the views of Baloch and attempts to prove that Shah Abd al-Latif's thought is inspired by Hinduism, saying the *Risalo*, particularly its *Sur Khahori* and *Sur Ramkali*, eloquently testifies to the all-Indian character of his religion and philosophy.²

With particular reference to the yogis, Jotvani generally reiterates the views of Ajvani.³ Unlike Muslim scholars, Jotvani states that Shah Abd al-Latif parted from the yogis on good terms. He does not, however, comment on what kind of yogis became Shah Abd al-Latif's companions nor on their origins or customs.

1. Ajvani, op. cit., p.81.

2. Jotvani, op. cit., p.6.

3. Op. cit., p.6.

G.M. Sayyid is able to admit, as a Muslim, that Shah Abd al-Latif could and did derive positive benefit from the company of yogis, from whom he learned to be unbiased and from whom he inherited qualities such as self-sacrifice, humility and asceticism.²

As regards Western scholars who have written on Shah Abd al-Latif, Sorley says nothing at all about yogis. He mentions only that Shah Abd al-Latif was inclined to an ascetic way of life and that he used to spend his time in the company of holy men.³

Schimmel, on the other hand, discusses Sufis and yogis in the second part of her section on Shah Abd al-Latif in *Pain and Grace*.⁴ She highlights the important points of resemblance between the Sufis and yogis. Though Sufis and yogis apparently belong to two different religious systems, each group, in their approach to life and their religious practices, are found to be parallel, if viewed closely. Both yogis and Sufis (at least most of them), being sincere seekers after Truth, voluntarily set out on a difficult path and welcome suffering and affliction.⁵

As the title of her chapter, 'Sufis and yogis in Shah Abd al-Latif's Poems' suggests, Schimmel discusses both Sufis and yogis together and gives examples from the poems.

1. Op. cit., p.6.

2. Sayyid, G.M., *Paigham Latif*, Hyderabad Sind, 1953, p.80.

3. Sorley, H.T., *Shah Abd al-Latif of Bhit*, London 1940, p.171.
The article written by W. Southey on Shah Abd al-Latif is worthless, since it is a blend of inaccuracies and superstitious stories, including an amusing anecdote about Shah Abd al-Latif giving an idol a drink of milk. The yogis, having seen the idol take the cup of milk, are determined to kill and eat Shah Abd al-Latif in order to obtain his magic powers. Shah Abd al-Latif, realising the danger, sank into the ground and arrived safely at Kotri. W. Southey, 'History of Shah Abdul Latif', in *Shah Latif*, ed. A.A. Qureshi, Karachi, 1978, p.29. This story is incidentally accepted uncritically without comment by Sorley.

4. Schimmel, op.cit., pp.190-235.

5. Ibid., pp.210-222.

In view of the fact that Shah Abd al-Latif has devoted two whole *surs*, *Ramkali* and *Khahori*, exclusively to yogis, and that there are references to yogis elsewhere in the *Risalo*, this chapter aims to concentrate closely on the theme of yogis in more detail in order to do full justice to this interesting aspect of Shah Abd al-Latif's work. Shah Abd al-Latif uses several titles to refer to yogis. Some of the names refer to sects and subsects of the different groups of yogis, while others are adjectives which allude to their characteristics, e.g. *dothi* suggests 'those who eat *duth*' (i.e. wild plants), *gunga* and *bora* means mute and deaf, i.e. these yogis who have voluntarily stopped talking or listening. The titles by which he refers to yogis are: Mahesi, Shivaite, Kanphata, Kancut, Kapari, Kanotiyya, Kanchir, Yogi, Bairagi, Purabi, Sami, Lahuti, Babu, Behari, Nanga, Adesi, Mavali, Sabri, Malakuti, Jabaruti, Kapat, Faqir, Khahori, Nuri, Nari, Dothi, Gunga, Bora, Sannyasi, Bhabhutiyya, Khaki, Rawal, Harkes, Gaudariyya.

As has already been mentioned in the introduction, Shah Abd al-Latif spent some years of his life in the company of yogis. This occurred at a crucial stage of his own emotional and spiritual development. There are, in his poetry, specific allusions to the period of his life spent with yogis, and it may be of use to summarise here the sequence of events as they are known of these three years.

At the age of twenty Shah Abd al-Latif seems to have left Kotri secretly as a frustrated lover. He proceeded along the Hala road towards Hyderabad (Sind) near which is a mountain called Ganjo-Takkar. In the vicinity of that mountain was a temple to the goddess Kali.¹ This was the centre where different groups of yogis used to gather both to perform a pilgrimage to that shrine, and also to prepare there for a pilgrimage to Hinglaj.²

Shah Abd al-Latif travelled in the company of yogis whom he had met on the way to the temple of Kali. Like the yogis he wore

1. The name of a Hindu goddess; her temples were found all over the sub-continent during the poet's lifetime.
2. Shahvani, op. cit., pp.7-9.

salmon-coloured clothes (his robe is still preserved in Bhit Shah), and taking a few necessary things for the journey, he then set out with the yogis for Hinglaj.

Shah Abd al-Latif actually refers in his poetry in *Sur Khahori* to the mountain of Ganjo-Takkar, where he questions his own motives in being there :¹

ڪهڙو آئيني ڪاڻ گنجي ڏنگر ڳام ۾؟
 پسي ته پهڙ ڪي، اچي نه آرام،
 مٿان ڏنگر ڏورين، اُجهين ڪو ڪو عوام،
 هرا ڪري حرام ڪاڻ ته ڪاهوڙي ٿين.

What is the purpose of your visiting the
 Ganjo mountain?

The sight of the mountain makes one restless.
 You should never search around
 ordinary hills.

Make every (worldly) thing unlawful, burn
 yourself, then you will become Khahori.

Shah Abd al-Latif must have followed the same route as the pilgrims, which goes along the Makran coast from Karachi, Miyani and Hinglaj. The journey must have been difficult since they went on foot, with no provision of food. Shah Abd al-Latif says:²

ڪئن نه ڪهڪان، پند پراهين هليا،
 ڏوٿڙا ڪه ڏٺ ڪي، جُنڀيا ڏي جابان،

1. Shahvani, op. cit., pp.1063-4.

2. Shahvani, op. cit., pp.1059-69.

ڪاهوڙين اُهيڃاڻ، اَنگِ نہ سڄي اڳڙي.

They do not take horse or camel with them,
and walk towards the far-off destiny.

Dothi¹ are searching in the desert
for wild growth²

The signs of Khahoris are that they do not wear
intact clothes on their body.

By crossing the deserted places on foot, they must have torn their clothes, as the poet mentions. On the journey, the pilgrims made offerings at different places. The shrine lies in a verdant valley surrounded by mountains. Further below is the resting place of Nani, a castellated mud edifice with a rough wooden door. A flight of steps leads down a deep semi-circular cleft through which pilgrims creep on all fours to reach the building. The shrine is a level, mud surface upon which a lamp is kept. A superstition is attached to it that a sinner cannot enter the shrine and only the chaste are able to enter.³

Shah Abd al-Latif seems to have visited a number of other places in Sind sacred to yogis, including shrines such as Pir Arr, Koteswar and Hinglaj.⁴ He refers several times in his poetry to Hinglaj and praises the yogis who visit that place. He writes:⁵

1. The nomadic people of Thar, who live on Duth, i.e. wild grass.
2. Duth or wild grass used as food, by poor nomads. Here reference is made to spiritual food, and Dothi are the seekers of spiritual food.
3. Briggs, op. cit., p.107.
4. Ibid., p.103.
5. Shahvani, op. cit., p.1124.

ڪَن ڪَتَ، ڪَپَتَ، ڪَپَڙِي، ڪَنوڙِيَا ڪَن ڌَارَ،
 هَلَن جِي هِنِگَلاڄ ڏِي، بابُو چڏي ٻَارَ،
 جِي ڪِنَ قَبُولُتھَارَ، هَلو! تہ ٽڪڻا پسون تَن جا.

The slit-eared, Kapat Kapari who wear
 earnings and have cuts in their ears;
 are going to Hinglaj
 These Babu have given up everything
 Those who accept 'nothingness'
 Let us go and visit their place.

Hinglaj is situated on the Makran coast, about 80 miles from
 the mouth of the Indus and some 12 miles from the sea. Hinglaj
 is one of the 15 *pithas*.¹

Shah Abd al-Latif refers to such a visit as follows:—²

نانگا نانِي هَلِئا، هِنِگَلاڄا هَلِي،
 دِيڪِي جَن دُوارڪا، مَهِيَسَن مَلِهي،
 آڳَه جَن عَلِي، آئون نَه جِيَندي اِن رِي.

The Nagas went to Hinglaj to
 visit Nani
 The *mehesi* (worshippers of Siva) happily
 visited the Dvarka.

1. Places where the dismembered limbs of Kali were scattered. Briggs, op. cit., pp.105-6.
2. Shahvani, op. cit., p.1111.

Their leader is Ali,¹ I cannot
live without them.

On the return journey from Hinglaj, pilgrims stopped at the shrine of the Mahadave, who is said to have been the brother of the Devi of Hinglaj. It is at Koteswar and was an ancient and celebrated *tirtha*. Shah Abd al-Latif must have passed this place on his way back to Nagar Thatta, which is an ancient town important to Gorakhnath yogis. On their way to Hinglaj, the pilgrims used to buy rosaries from Thatta. These rosaries were made by local people from hard yellow limestones, which they collected from the ground and strung. Pilgrims used to buy two types of rosaries. On reaching Hinglaj they offered one to the goddess, and then put it on themselves. On arriving at Asapuri Devis' shrine at Nagar Thatta on the return journey, the pilgrims offered the other rosary to her and again took it back.¹

Other places are mentioned by Shah Abd al-Latif in his poetry, such as Qandahar, Kabul and above all Benares (Kasi). However, Kasi is such a common symbol of Hinduism in Indo/Pakistani Sufi poetry that it may not necessarily be assumed that Shah Abd al-Latif actually went there in the company of yogis, although he may have done, as Kasi was visited by Gorakhnath yogis.

Shah Abd al-Latif also refers in his poetry to other places which had religious significance for Hindus, such as Lakhpat, Girnar, Jaisalmir, Lasbelo, Purab-Bandar, Jhunagarh, Mughalbhin, Halar, Khanbhat and Dvarka.³ Some of these places, at least, he must have visited. Certainly, he went to those within a reasonable distance from his home.

1. In the above verse, although the poet is speaking of the yogis who are worshippers of the Hindu god Shiva, the poet is happy to mention Ali in this context. What is important is the search for the divine, whether the guide is Ali or Shiva.
2. Briggs, op. cit., p. 104.
3. Gurbukhshani, op. cit., p. 13; Advani, op. cit., p. 4.

The motive for Shah Abd al-Latif spending three years with the yogis should not be regarded as escapism, but rather as the wish to learn from them. After this period of spiritual probation, Shah Abd al-Latif returned as a more mature and experienced man to his home town to live again among his own people. No doubt his experiences with the yogis enabled him to rise above petty religious differences and to allude in his poetry to ways in which the society which he saw around him could be improved. Certainly, there was much to be improved. This was a rigid class-ridden society in which the religious leaders made life intolerable for the common people. The message which emerges from Shah Abd al-Latif's poetry is one of tolerance between Muslims and Hindus as well as one of hope that the true purpose of religion is self-realisation for the individual. Through his poetry he conveys a message of love, unity and peace for mankind.

Before discussing in more detail the relationship between Shah Abd al-Latif and yogis, it may be useful to give a brief note on *yoga* and *yogis*. It is interesting to note that yoga was practised in the Punjab and in Sind long before its development in Vedic India. The term *yoga* refers to spiritual disciplines which are found in Buddhism and Hinduism and which aim at the attaining of higher consciousness and liberation from ignorance, suffering and rebirth.

The word *yoga* is 'derived from the root *yuj-*, to connect or join. *Yoga* can thus be translated as a connection or union, i.e. the union of the individual soul with the cosmic soul or the Supreme Principle'.¹

Yoga is a spiritual effort on the part of the individual, who by passing through physical and spiritual mortification, reaches a higher state of consciousness. In other words, 'the whole purpose of yoga is to provide the specific disciplines and techniques of inner control whereby liberation of this spiritual reality from its confinement is brought about'.² The ultimate end is the union of one's own self with the prime source of all things.

1. Pott, P.H., *Yoga and Yantra*, 1971, trans. Needham R., The Hague, 1966, p.1.

2. Berry T., *Religions of India: Hinduism, Yoga, Buddhism*, London, 1971, p.77.

Such a union is possible only after the individual has attained liberation from the cycle of rebirth.¹ After achieving liberation, the adept is not born again, but attains supreme bliss in union with his source. In order to achieve such an end, the individual has to overcome the many obstacles which lie on the path of *yoga*. These obstacles are called *klesas*, which are described as all impulses leading to the negation of one's 'true self'. Ignorance, for example, is one of the greatest impediments, since it causes the adept to cling to the temporary world, and to consider his own soul as distinct from the cosmic soul. Another obstacle is attachment to this life, worldly things and other such objects.²

The following discussion is limited to those facets of the development of *yoga* which bear on Shah Abd al-Latif and his relationship with the yogis. Within Hinduism, two of the major schools are the Shivaite and the Vishnavite orders.

The Shivaites are so-called because of their chief god, Shiva. The Vishnavites are named after their godhead, Vishnu. Turning first to the Shivaites, some of them are called Gorakhnathis or

Nathis. They are also known as Kanphata yogis because of their slit ears. The Gorakhnathis followed their foremost *guru*, Gorakhnath. Nath yogis were exponents of Tantric *yoga* or Hatha *yoga* which originated in Mahayana Buddhism.³ The Kanphata yogis who lived in north-west India and beyond were possibly influenced by Buddhist thought since traces of that thought can be found in their practices.⁴ The Kanphatas could not avoid being in contact with Muslims since the important Hindu shrine of Hinglaj was in Muslim hands.

1. According to Hindu belief, a person is reborn over and over again at different states, the levels according to his previous actions or *karma*.

2. Pott, *op.cit.*, p. 1.

3. Omen, J.C., *The Mystics, Ascetics and Saints of India*, Delhi 1973, pp. 150–2.

4. *Ibid.*

According to Briggs, Gorakhnathis or Kanphatas are thought to be a better class of yogis, although some undesirable elements have crept in and are to be found amongst them.¹

Also belonging to the Gorakhnathi group are the Aughar yogis who have not undergone the final ceremony of having their ears split. After that ritual they become Kanphatas. The Gaudiyya yogis form part of the Aughar sect but they sometimes do wear earrings like the Kanphatas.²

Rawal or Nagnath are another group who are associated with the Shivaïtes. They are the most important group of Muslim yogis who are found in Peshawar and Afghanistan, and whose chief seat is in Rawalpindi. They are great wanderers.³

The Shivaïtes carry two types of rosaries: *thumra* and *asapuri*: the first is made of small beads, the other of slightly larger ones, made of hard yellow limestones from Thatta in Sind.⁴

As for the second major group of yogis, the Vishnuvites, they were founded by Ramananda in the late 14th and early 15th centuries. The order then spread all over northern India.⁵ Amongst the sub-sects of the Vishnuvites are the Sannyasis, Nagas and the Bairagis.

The Sannyasis derive their name from the term *Sannyasa*, which literally means resignation or abandonment. The *Bhagavad-gita* defines *Sannyasa* as the renunciation of actions done with some purpose in view. According to Berry:—

1. Briggs, G.W., *Gorakhnath and Kanphata Yogis*, New Delhi, 1973, pp.1–2.
2. Ibid., p.1–10. It is interesting to note that Briggs mentions another section of the Kanphatas who are called Ja'fir Pirs and are Muslims. Although they are Kanphatas, Hindu yogis do not eat with them. They are found in the Punjab. Ibid., pp.64–5.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid., pp.103–4.
5. J.N. Farquhar, 'The Historical Position of Ramananda', JRAS, 1922, Part III, pp.373–4.

The Sannyasis were wandering mendicants, men who live the homeless life, without wife, children or possessions of any sort except robe, staff, begging bowl and drinking cup.¹

Although the term Sannyasi may be used in a general sense, it sometimes has a narrower application. It may be applied to Vishnuvite ascetics, such as the officiants at the Krishna temple at Udipi in the south Manara district of Madras.²

In another place, the same author remarks as follows:—

Although, however, Sannyasis and Vairagis and other similar denominations are used, and correctly used in a wider acceptance, yet one occasionally does find them limited in meaning and designating distinct and inimical bodies of men. When this is the case, it may be generally concluded that the Sannyasis imply mendicant followers of Siva and the Vairagis, those of Vishnu.³

As for the Bairagis, their name is derived from *bai* (meaning 'without') and *rag* (meaning 'attachment'). This group will recruit any Hindu irrespective of caste or colour.⁴ The Bairagis paint on their foreheads the *trifla*, consisting of three upright lines, starting from the top of the nose, the central line being red, which typifies Vishnu; the other two lines are yellow, which represent Brahman and Shiva.⁵ The Bairagis carry a rosary made from basil (*tulsi*) beads.⁶

1. Berry, Thomas, *Religious of India: Hinduism, Yoga, Buddhism*, New York 1971, pp.8–9.
2. Wilson, H.H., *Sketch of the Religious Sects of the Hindus*. London 1861, p.141.
3. Ibid.
4. Oman, op. cit., p.189.
5. Briggs, op. cit., pp.12–16.
6. Ibid., pp.103–4.

Shah Abd al-Latif's treatment of yogis in his poetry.

The theme of yogis in Sindhi poetry was known before the time of Shah Abd al-Latif. According to the extant poetic sources in Sindhi which pre-date the work of Shah Abd al-Latif, it would appear that the first poet to speak extensively about yogis was Shah Lutf Allah Qadiri (1020/1611–1090/1679). His two main works are *Minhaj al-Marifat*, written in Persian, and *Sindhi Risalo*.¹ This poet belonged to the Qadiri *tariqa* and many *murids* gathered around him. In his poetry he mentions various groups of yogis, such as Sannyasis, Adesis and Kaparis, and he refers to their way of life in order to shed light on his explanation of the Sufi path.²

جتي هُئا ڪا پڙي، هاڻي هن نه هُندِ،
 چنا سڱ سَناسين، پُڙا پراهين پنڌِ،
 سي نانگا نِسنڱ وٺا، ”ڪين“ بچي جي ڪنڌِ،
 پَسو ساميرِا سَنڌِ، لوڪان لڪي جي وٺا.

Where once there were Kaparis, they are no more.
 Sannyasis have broken relationships
 They have gone away to a distant place
 The fearless Nanga have left, taking 'nothingness'
 on their shoulders.
 Look at the 'secret way of the Samis',³
 Who have hidden themselves from the
 people and left.

1. Baloch, N.A., *Shah Lutf Allah Qadiri jo Kalam*, Hyderabad Sind, 1968, p. 11.

2. Baloch, op. cit., pp.22–23.

3. The word used in Sindhi is *Sandh* – which means a hole broken through the house. This suggests the way yogis disappear suddenly from a place.

Shah Inayat (1620 A.D. – 1708 A.D.) also uses the theme of yogis in his poetry. Indeed, he devotes two whole *surs*, *Ramkali* and *Purab* to yogis, whom he calls by various names including Adesi, Purabi, Sannyasi, Lahuti and Rawal. He refers to the habits and places of pilgrimage of the yogis and uses these in a Sufi context:¹

جي پائين جو ڳي ٿيان، تہ پر جو ڳيڪي پار،
ادب، اخلاص، صبر، شڪرانو، دمر ڏک وِسارِ،
انٿي پهر، عنايت چئي، مهر پري مَ گهار،

(مڙه پوري منجهه گهار)

جي سڪين اِيءَ ڪار، تہ ”وِرنات“ ويجهو ٿين.

If you want to become a yogi,
then observe the tradition of the yogis.
Forget *adab*, *ikhlas*, *sabr*, *shukur*,
enmity and sorrows
Inayat says you should spend every moment
of your time buried within yourself.
When you have learnt this undertaking,
then you will come nearer to
virnath.²

In another place Shah Inayat writes:—³

نڪي ڳولين ڳوٺ ۾، پيهي ڪين پٺن،
ويئي بک بس ڪري، اتان آديسين،

1. Baloch, op. cit., p.46.

2. The spiritual leader of yogis, or this could be a reference to God.

3. Baloch, op. cit., p.48.

اُڱھريو، عنايت چئي، تَن کي ڏنو ڏيھ ڏيڻ،
گورک گودڙين، آسڻ ويئي آئيو.

They do no search in the village,
nor do they go begging around.
Hunger has left the Adesis.
The Master of the Universe has provided for them
without their asking, says Inayat.
While Gaudriyya śat,¹ Gorakh came
to their courtyard.

As for Shah Abd al-Latif's treatment of the yogis in his poetry, it should be emphasised that in evitably he does not present them in a systematic or consistent manner, since he is a poet, not a scholar of religion. However, the theme of yogis is important to him. They are mentioned frequently in his work and are referred to by more than thirty different titles.

Shah Abd al-latif reveals extensive knowledge of the activities of yogis. According to him, yogis who have renounced the world and reduced their belongings to a minimum, carry a begging-bowl, a *signad* (whistle) made of horn or wood, which they blow before meals and before and after prayers, and a *gaudri* (wallet) made of rags or patched clothes in which they carry food which they have been given in charity. Yogis also take with them a *taus tavas* or *bairagun* (crutch) on which they rest their chin and arms when meditating. They also carry with them a pair of fire tongs. Shah Abd al-Latif gives detailed descriptions of the appearance of yogis in his poetry.³

1. A type of Yogis.
2. Reference is made to the first Guru, Gorakhnath. In this verse, Gorakh came to the yogis to help them, because of their sincerity.
3. Advani, op. cit., p. 418.

سَکَّیُونُ سِلِیُونُ گَبْرِیُونُ نِیْیِ نُولِ نَکُو،
 پَتُّ هُیِ پَتَّ سِیْنِ، پِیْیِ نِیْنِ پَکُو،
 لَاهُوتُ جِنِ لَکُو، سِی مَرَّهَیَانِ مَوْرَ نَهْ نَکِیَانِ.

Get rid of the *signad*, the rope and the ragbag,
 all three things, and the sacred thread (*janêo*)
 Throw the begging bowl onto the
 floor, break it to pieces.
 Those who are in love with Lahut*
 never leave their resting-places.

کُوءِ گودڑا! پَن گَبْرِیُونُ! نِیْیِ کدائُون کَانِءِ
 جیدَانِهِنِ جَوِگِ وِیو، نِیْیِ تِیْدَانِهِنِ نَانِءِ
 یُتُو اِیْتَن پَانِءِ تَه سَکَّیُونُ شَوْمَتَ هَتَّ جُونِ.

Abandon the *gaudrî* and patched frock, burn
 the blanket.
 Where there is *yoga*, fix your eyes there.
 You must understand that carrying
 whistles in one's hand is an evil.²

In another place, the poet writes:—³

1. A blanket made from old rags, which is also used as bag to carry food.
2. The poet suggests that yogis usually carry these things but that at times this practice is also followed by hypocrites. A true yogi should free himself of these trappings. Advani, loc. cit.
3. Ibid., p. 419.

* Those yogis who have reached the Sufi stage of Lahut need not travel nor are rituals applicable any more to them.

پَتُ چڙڀائون پَتَ ۾ ڏنڊ چڙڀائون ڏسُ!
 الاِشَان اڳي ٿيا، موٽي ٿين نَه مِسُ،
 هي چڙڀائون حِسُ، وڃي ڪالھ ڪُلُ ٿيا.

They have thrown their begging bowls onto the
 ground and abandoned their *signad* (whistles)
 and *bairaguns*.

They are above evil, and cannot become
 impure again.

They have given up worldly desires.

Since yesterday they have attained union with
 the whole.

Shah Abd al-Latif describes the yogis in these words:¹

اچي پيا آت ۾، وات وڃائي جَن،
 اوءِ بصير بَرِن ۾ انڌا ٿيو اُيَن،
 ڪَننِ آڏيون تاڙيون، ڳنگنِ جئن گهمَن،
 فِراقِيءَ فرمان جو، آهي پُر ٻوڙن،
 لنگها ٿيا لاهوٽ ڪي، ستا پيا سڪَن،
 ڪَٻَٽِ ڪاهوڙين، آه اُٿئي پئي نه لهي.

Those who are overcome by longing and sorrow,
 have given up the worldly path.

1. Advani, op. cit., p.375.

Though they are able to see
 they are standing in the desert
 like the blind.
 Their ears are closed
 Like the dumb they are roaming around
 Those deaf ones are dismayed because of
 the (Divine order of) separation
 For Lahut they have nullified themselves
 While in sleep even, they are seeking
 the same.
 The Khahoris never give up longing
 at any time.

Shah Abd al-Latif recognises the effort needed by the yogis to attain their goal. He describes them as wandering around forests, mountains and deserts, detaching themselves from every relationship. He appreciates their patience and determination to purify themselves by voluntarily inflicting restraint, denial and torture on themselves.¹

ڏسي ڏوري ڏونگرين، وات وڃائي جن،
 ڪرندان ڪي ڀرڻو، رڳڏ سي نه رڙهن،
 ٻيئي درا ديون ڪيو، پيرت تان نه ڇڏن،
 ڏوڏ پريان لء ڌار ڪيو، ويچارا وجهن،
 خبر ڪاهوڙين، آهي لڪ لاهوت جي.

While looking and searching in the mountains,
 they have (voluntarily) lost their way.
 They have left it by following the contrary path
 They do not take the straight path.

1. Advani, op. cit., p.375.

They have given up both the worlds, and never
ask for the correct path.
Those lonely ones are putting ashes over themselves
for the sake of the Beloved.
The Khahoris possess some
knowledge about the Lahut.

The poet advises his audience to seek the company of such
true wanderers:—¹

تان وڻن ويهي آءِ اڳڻ ڪاهوڙين جي،
جوشِ ڏنائون جيءَ کي، لڪائي لوڪاءِ
ڏوٿين ڪنهن ڏڪاءِ سمهي سُڪ نه ماڻيو.

Go and sit in the courtyard² of Khahoris
By keeping it a secret from the common people
they have burnt themselves.
Because of pain, the Dothi never sleep
contented.

Shah Abd al-Latif is aware of the fact that some people
masqueraded as yogis to obtain the admiration and charity of
the common people, who used to give the yogis food and alms.
For such false yogis he is full of condemnation, as he mentions
in Sur Asa:—³

ڪوڙو تون ڪُفرِ سين، ڪافر مَ ڪوٺاءِ،
هندو هڏ نه آئين، جڻيو تو نه جڳاءِ،
تلڪُ تنين کي لا، سچا جي شرڪِ سين.

1. Advani, op. cit., p.371.

2. The poet is suggesting one should seek the company of yogis.

3. Advani, op. cit., loc. cit.

You are untrue to *Kufr*;
 You should not therefore call yourself an
 unbeliever (*kafir*).
 Nor are you a Hindu, so the *jameo*¹ does not suit
 you.
 The only people who are eligible to wear the
*tilak*² are those who are faithful to *shirk*.

Here Shah Abd al-Latif is critical of those people who do not even adhere to their own, albeit infidel, standards of conduct imposed on them by that religion. To such people he gives the following advice in *Sur Ramkali*:-

جي پائنن جوڳي ٿيان، ته من پوري منجه مار،
 دائر دونهن دل ۾، من سين مالها وار،
 سه سیکا آر، آڳي جي آدب سين.

If you want to become a yogi,
 Then bury worldly desires within yourself.
 Kindle the flame of love within your heart
 and count the rosary with your soul.
 Whatever befalls you from God,
 Be content with gratitude.¹

As regards the differences between the various groups of yogis, it is difficult to state categorically whether or not Shah Abd al-Latif understood these clearly. Indeed, he uses more than thirty

1. *Jameo* means 'the sacred thread' worn by Hindus.

2. *Tilak* is a symbol on the forehead of yogis.

3. Shahvani, op. cit., p.1128.

titles to refer to yogis. On some occasions he appears to use diverse yogi names indiscriminately but at other times he shows an awareness of certain differences between the yogi groups. Were he using these names interchangeably, he would surely not need to cite so many different sub-divisions of the yogis; one or two would suffice. Indeed, it is almost as if he wants to display to his reader the knowledge he has acquired of the different yogi groups. Mentioning their names does not, of course, indicate that he knows the doctrinal variations between them (although he may have done), but by travelling with yogis for several years, the poet must have learnt many of their beliefs and ways.

Shah Abd al-Latif refers specifically to the Kanphata yogis, who, as already mentioned, wear earrings made of bone, horn, ivory, glass, stones and other types of metal. He speaks of them in the following way in *Sur Ramkali*:

ڪَن ڪَٽَ، ڪاپَٽَ، ڪاپَٽِي، ڪَنوٽِيَا، ڪَن چِيرَ،
 سَدا وَهَنِ سَامُهَانِ، عاشِقَ اُتَرِ هِيرَ،
 تَسَا ڏيئي تَن ڪِي، ساڙِيائُون سَرِيرَ،
 جِي فَنّا تِيَا فَقِيرَ، هَلُو! تَڪِيَا پَسُونِ تِنِ جا.

The slit-ear Kapat yogis, wearing earrings
 Who have cuts in their ears.
 They are the true lovers who sit facing the
 cool northerly wind.
 They have starved and tortured their bodies
 Those who have annihilated themselves,
 Let us go and visit the dwellings of such
faqirs.¹

1. Advani, op. cit., p.397.

He seems to be referring to the Kanphata yogis in particular, who wear around their loins a special rope made of black sheeps' wool, or a strip of cotton, to which a *langoti*¹ is fastened, when he says the following:²

ڪَشي ساڻُ ڪَشن، ڏيلَ ڪَيائون ڏهرا،
پيٽَ نه هيرِ يائون پانهنجا، چوري ساڻُ چسن،
اهڙيءَ راهَ رسن، ڪاڙِي ڪاڙِي ڪاڙِي ڪي.

They tied their bodies with leather bands
To make themselves lean.

They never allowed their appetites
expensive delicacies.
In this way the Kapari reached Kabul.

Shah Abd al-Latif is clearly referring to the Vairagis, a group of Sannyasis, when he writes:—³

ويهي ويراڳين جو، ٻئي ڏينهن ٻڌم حال،
ان جا ڏاڳا ڏور ڀڪليا، جاڳوٽا زوال،
تن جاڻي جڻائون ڇڏيون، چوٽا چڱيءَ چال،
ويچارا وجود جي، ڪنهن سان ڪن نه ڳال،
نانگا ٿيا نهال، لڪا پٽن لوڪ ۾.

1. The loin cloth worn by Hindus, especially yogis.
2. Advani, op. cit., p.409.
3. Advani, op. cit., p.393.

The next day I sat down, and listened to the
story of Vairagis.

Their salmon-coloured clothes were covered with
dust.

Their hair-bands were worn out.

They had let their hair grow quite long.

The lonely ones never talk to anyone about their
being.

These *Nanga* are content and happy.

They move about unmarked amongst the
common folk.

As far as Shah Abd al-Latif's attitude to the yogis in poetry is concerned, it is generally one of obvious admiration and respect. Indeed, he uses the highest praise when he likens the spirituality of the yogis to the highest levels attained by the Sufis.

He considers that it is a privilege to spend time in the company of yogis. He is of the opinion that their company is spiritually profitable to everyone. He remembers them in the following words:²

مُونِ سِي دِنَا، مَا! جَنِينِ دَلُو پَرِينِءِ كِي،
رَهِی اُچَی رَاتَرِی، تَنِ جُنَگَنِ سَنَدِیءِ جَاءِ
تَنِينِ جِي سَاچَءِ تَرُھو تَنِي تَارِ مِرِ.

O mother! I saw those
Who have seen the Beloved.
It is worth spending a night at the
place of such courageous ones
Having an acquaintance with them
will serve as a raft to sail across the
deep waters.

1. Advani, op. cit., p.393.

2. Ibid., p.370.

In another place, in *Sur Ramkali*, he speaks in glowing terms about the yogis:¹

سامي کامي پرینء لثم، کُسي تيا کباب،
جھڑو دسن دوه کي، تھڑو تن ثواب،
اوتين ارتي گاڏنون، منجهان اکين آب،
سندو ذات جواب، تون کن پجين تن کي؟

The *Sami* being cut in pieces are burning
like *kabab* for the Beloved.
In their eyes, piety and profanity are the same.
They are shedding tears which are combined
with blood.
How could you ever question such people regarding
caste or creed?

He expresses his views in the following lines in *Sur Ramkali*.²

راه شريعت هلئا، تفكر طريقون،
حال حقيقت رستا، معرفت ماگون،
ناسوت، ملکوت، جبروت، اي انام لتون،
پس لاهوت لنگهون، هاهوتا متي هلئا.

They follow the path of Shari'a, and the contemplation
of the *tariqa*, as their way, they drive

1. Advani, op. cit., p.397.

2. Shahvani, op. cit., 1139.

into meditation
 They reach the state of *haqiqa*,
 because their destiny is *marifa*.
 Nasut, Malakut, Jabarut, is the reward they
 have received.
 Thus they cross the Lahut, and pass beyond
 the stage of Hahut.

In this verse, the poet uses Sufi terminology to describe what has been achieved by yogis. Although the word 'yogi' is not mentioned, the very fact that *Sur Ramkali* is devoted to yogis suggests clearly that he is referring to them in the above lines.

Shah Abd al-Latif is impressed by the modesty and selfless devotion of the yogis. He believes that they are true seekers after truth.

Shah Abd al-Latif is not blindly uncritical of the yogis. He agrees with the yogis on the spiritual journey of the soul, but for him such a journey is within one's own life and not in a cycle of rebirths.

In the practice of *yoga*, there are eight stages which can be seen as steps in the mystical ladder. These stages help the yogi to ascend towards the deeper states of mind. They are as follows:—¹

1. *Yama* – abstinence or restraint.
2. *Niyama* – the observance of spiritual discipline.
3. *Asna* – postures. A number of sitting positions are adopted by the yogi to attain the intended goal.

1. Hajime, N., *The Religions and Philosophies of India*, Tokyo, 1973, part III, pp.4–6.
 Berry, T., *The Religions of India: Hinduism, Yoga, Buddhism*, London, 1971, pp.93–101.
 Oman, op. cit., pp.175–6.
 Pott, P.H., *Yoga and Yantra*, The Hague, 1966, pp.4–6.

4. *Pranyana*—regulation of breath, for inner purity and preparation for meditation.
5. *Pratyahara*—abstraction of the senses.
6. *Dharana*—fixing of thoughts without the assistance of senses.
7. *Dhyanana*—meditation as the result of undistracted concentration.
8. *Samadhi*—the final stage in the yoga mystical ladder, when the unification of subject and object is attained.

Yama – abstinence or restraint concerning the outside world – is the first step on the mystical ladder. A yogi restrains his activities with regard to others, that is, he practices *ahimsa* (non-violence), telling the truth, maintaining celibacy, and not doing anything that is morally wrong.¹ This step of *yoga* is comparable to one of the stages in Sufism, i.e. *wara*².

Shah Abd al-Latif appears to be well aware of these different stages in *yoga*. He emphasises the importance of abstinence. In *Sur Khahori* and *Ramkali* he praises this quality as mastered by yogis. He often compliments such seekers of God for training themselves to subsist on a minimum diet. They are not interested in food or any other worldly possession. They possess nothing, and thus they are free of all worldly cares. They are indifferent to wealth, good food or high status. For such divinely intoxicated people such things have no value at all. He says that such people can be easily differentiated from the rest of the world.²

سَگَا مُنْه سَنَدَن، پیرین پراٹا کیترا،
 سَا جُو ۽ دُورِ آئیا، سُوٹھان جِت مُنْجَہن،
 گُجَہان گُجُہون کَن، تِہان پَراہین پَنَد جُون.

1. Pott, op. cit., p.4.

2. Shahvani, op. cit., p.1060.

Their faces are dry and skinny: they wear
 old and worn-out slippers
 They have discovered such a place,
 where even the knowledgeable are perplexed
 (These mysterious seekers) are secretly
 planning for a far-off higher path.

Shah Abd al-Latif expresses his appreciation of the divine seekers for their special qualities. They consume as little food and drink as possible and keep away from the company of people and social life. They find worldly goods offensive. Their time is occupied in contemplation and recollection.¹

قُوتَ كَرَّيَا كَايَرِي، طَعَامَ نَهْ طَامَاعُو،
 سَيْنَ هَنِيَاوُونِ سُجَّ مِ پَهَرِ نَهْ پِينَاوُو،
 اَوَسَرَ آسَاوُو، اُتِي گُونْدَرِ گُديَا.

They are weary of eating and have
 no desire for food;
 They beg in the desert, but
 they are not beggars.
 They are seekers of nothingness, and have
 attained the companionship of sorrows
 and pain.

The next stage in *yoga* is *niyama* – the observance of spiritual discipline. A yogi is expected to observe purity both in ritual and in the moral sphere. He should be content with his fate and practise asceticism. With regard to asceticism or *tapas*, a yogi should be able to bear hunger, thirst, heat and cold.²

1. Advani, op. cit., p.408.

1. Pott, op. cit., p.5.

There are several examples in the work of Shah Abd al-Latif where asceticism, contentment and endurance of pain, hunger and thirst are attributed to yogis. For example, he says:¹

بُڪَ وَدَاوُونُ بَگَرِين، جوڳي ڪندا جُجُ،
 طلب نہ رَڪَنَ طَعَامَ جِي، اوڻو پِين اُجُ،
 لاهوئن، لَطِيفُ چي، مَنُ ماري ڪَئو مُجُ،
 سامي جهاڳي سُجُ، وَسِينُ ڪي ويجهڙا.

The yogis put hunger in their bags
 and celebrate it (i.e. hunger).
 They have no quests nor desire for food
 but satisfy themselves by drinking thirst.
 Lahuti (i.e. ascetics), says Latif, have subjected
 their ego to their will.
 Samis have travelled through the wasteland
 and reached the inhabited place.

According to Shah Abd al-Latif, such yogis have to make great efforts to achieve their goal. They have disciplined their base desires and brought them under control. Consequently their actions appear peculiar to the common people.²

دَني دُڪُويَا، اَنَ دَني راضي ٿئا،
 صُوفي تي ٿئا، جن ڪينَ ڪيائون پاڻ سِين.

They are offended when given, and satisfied
 when ignored (i.e. not given alms);
 They have become Sufis by possessing nothingness.

Pretenders, notes our poet, are quite different. Those who claim to be yogi, are supposed to follow the same path, but one can judge them from their behaviour.³

1. Shahvani, op. cit., p.1163.

2. Shahvani, op. cit., p.122.

3. Shahvani, op. cit., p.1132.

گولا جي گِراهَ جا، جوٺا سي جوڳي،
قَتَلَ اُوڦوڳي، جَنِين شِڪَمَ ساديا.

Slaves to their appetites are
false yogis.

Those who are more concerned with
their food are entirely mere dregs.

A true seeker, says Shah Abd al-Latif, abstains from the world and keeps hoping to be released from it soon.

Shah Abd al-Latif observes that, although the practice of abstinence may appear difficult to common people, a true seeker, who is fully submerged in love, feels differently:¹

سڪو سڀ سرتيون! سڀن ملان سير،
بيو مٽائي نير، اُڀيون اُڀر آسري.

Oh friends! learn the art of abstinence (chastity)
from the oyster (shells)

Which abstain from having any other (water) and
longing only for the rain water.

The third stage of *yoga* is *asna* or sitting posture.

According to Oman, for the purpose of meditation and for the mortification of the flesh, a large number of sitting positions or *āsans* are adopted by yogis. Some of them are very difficult and need long practice.²

In the work of Shah Abd al-Latif, he makes some allusion to the sitting positions of the yogis. Since his work is not, however, a study of the *yoga* system, one cannot expect references to all the postures. Nevertheless, he refers to yogis in the following words:³

1. Advani, op. cit., p.294.

2. Oman, op. cit., p.51.

3. Shahvani, op. cit., pp.1138-39.

پاڻو مٿه موٽن ۾، ويٺا سي وِھسن،
جوڳي جاتا ڪن، آيا الوھيت ۾.

They are enjoying sitting and putting their face
in their knees.

They are making a pilgrimage, and have reached
uluhiyyat.

In another place, he is possibly referring to the sitting position
of yogis when they meditate:—¹

مونا جن مَجْرَابُ، جُسو جامع تَن جو،
قِبلي نِماءِ قَلْبُ ڪري، تَن کي ڪيائون طَوافُ،
تَحْقِيقَ جِي تَكْبِيرَ چئي، جِسْمَانِ دَنائُونِ جوابُ،
تَن ڪهڙو ڏوه حسابُ، جن هِنَئَڙي هادي حَلُ ٿيو.

Their knees are the *mihrab*, their body is the
mosque

They treat their heart like the *qibla* and
circumambulate it.

They have said the *takbir* of truth, and
neglected their bodies.

Of what account is sin to them, the guide
has penetrated their heart.

Pranayana – the regulation of breathing – is the fourth step
in *yoga* practice towards mystical experience. This involves in-
tense mental concentration, the regulation of breathing which
eliminates impurity from within the body, and brings higher

1. Advani, op. cit., p.402.

perfection in the body and the psychic faculties.¹ This practice of breathing is similar to the Sufi way of holding on to the breath. With regard to breathing, there are no direct references to it in the *Risalo*, although there are several allusions to the attainment of inner and outer purity.

Pratyahara – the fifth stage of *yoga*, involves the abstraction of the senses or the withdrawal of the sense organs from their objects. In order to transcend contact with the external world which ties the individual to *Sam sara*, the external cycle of rebirth, one should restrict one's sense perception. This is done by concentrating the attention on a single point, till one is no longer conscious of the external world.²

Shah Abd al-Latif makes some references to this stage, advising yogis to lose consciousness with the external world in order to gain a higher goal. For example:–³

تَحْقِيقَ جِي پَرِي تُون، مَتِي رِي ڪُٽِيڇ،
هَڪَل حَقِيقَتَ جِي، ٻوڙو ٿي ٻڌِيڇ،
اَنڌو ٿي پَسِيڇ، مُشَاهِدو مَحْبُوبُ جو.

You must carry the load of realisation
without (using) your head.
Listen to the call of Truth by becoming deaf,
Become blind and have the perception of the
Beloved.

Once yogis are in control of their senses, then nothing can distract or attract them, as our poet comments:⁴

1. Berry, op. cit., p.97.
2. Pott, op. cit., p.5.
3. Shahvani, op. cit., pp.1070–71.
4. Ibid., pp.722–23.

ڪاڪ نہ جھليا ڪا پڙي، موھيا نہ محلن،
 پاڻين ۽ ٻانھن جي، پنڌن ڪين ٻجھن،
 لکين لاهوتين، اھڙيون اورئا ڇڏيون.

Kak¹ did not stop them, nor could that palace attract them.

They are not tied and trapped by the relationship of ladies and maidservants.

The Lahutis have left hundreds and thousands of such (beauties) behind.

As for the sixth stage, *dharana*, here the yogis can prevent their thoughts from wandering and are able to fix them without the assistance of their senses. This they achieve by mental concentration, which brings them to the first stage of liberation.²

The seventh stage is, *dhiyana* or continuous remembrance. During this stage the yogi focuses his attention intensely on an object. When he reaches the point where his concentration is no longer distracted, then he is able to perceive the intended object with his mind so clearly that it is as if he has seen it with his eyes.³

Shah Abd al-Latif is possibly referring to yogis in this stage, when he says the following words:⁴

1. Name of Mumal's town, but here it means worldly attractions.

2. Pott, op. cit., p.6.

3. Lester, R.C., *Ramanuja on the Yoga*, Madras, 1976, p.23.

4. Advani, op. cit., p.370.

ڪاهوڙين خفيءَ سين، سوڄهي لڌو سُبْحانُ،
 عاشق اُهڙي اکرين، لَنڪهيا لامڪانُ،
 هوءُ ۾ گڏجي هوءُ ٿيا، بابو جي ٻريان،
 سڀوئي سُبْحانُ، آيو نظر اُن جي.

Khahoris (wandering yogis) with their secret
 remembrance, searched and found God (*subhan*)
 The lovers with these words reached the place
 beyond time and space (*lamakan*).
 Babu (yogis) have been roasted and united
 with Him and become Him (God),
 Everything they see, they see God in it.

This is the stage preceding *Samadhi*, when the yogi aims at annihilation.

Samadhi is the final stage of spiritual consciousness in 'the eight member yoga of the orthodox yoga school'.¹ When the individual reaches this stage, he loses consciousness, and is no more subject to relativity. This state is beyond description, transcending the concept of place and time; it is that of bliss. There are two types of *samadhi*. In one, the person is conscious of the object on which he is concentrating. In another undifferentiated *samadhi*, all consciousness disappears, and mental functions are stopped; the person is fully liberated, and arrives at an identification with the Divine.

Shah Abd al-Latif advises yogis on what they should do if they want to attain that stage, in the following lines:³

جي ڀائين جوڳي ٿيان، تہ ڪين ڀالي پيءُ
 ناہِ ٺهاري هٿ ڪي ”آئون“ سين اُت تہ پيءُ
 تہ سَندو وحدت ويءُ طالب! توڙا ماڻهين.

1. Hajime, op. cit., pp.4-6.
2. Ellade, M., *Yoga: Immortality and Freedom*, trans. Willard, R.T., New York, 1958, pp.79-81.
3. Shahvani, op. cit., pp.1128-29.

If you want to become a yogi,
then drink the cup of (non-existence)
annihilation.

Seek and find non-existence.
Never stand there with 'I' (i.e. ego or self).
Seeker! then only will you achieve the
merchandise of unity.

Our poet also comments on those yogis who have attained union after annihilation.¹

جتي عرش نہ اُپ ڪو، زمين نہ ڏرو
نڪو چاڙهائو چنڊ جو، نڪو سج سڙو
اُتي آديسين جو، لڳو ڌنگ ڌرو
پري پين پري، ناٿ ڏٺائون ناٿ ۾.

Where there is no Divine Throne nor sky,
nor any particle of earth,
nor rising moon, nor
signs of the sun.
There is the stamping²
place of Adesi
They looked into the distance, and there they saw
Nath (Shiva or God) in annihilation.

This analysis of the work of Shah Abd al-Latif in relation of yogis and their practices, reveals that our poet does have some understanding of the *yoga* system, though he does not enumerate the eight stages of *yoga* systematically, nor is the number of the stages mentioned by him. It would appear, however, that some of the stages of *yoga* are referred to in his poetry, in *Sur Khahori* and *Ramkali*.

1. Shahvani, op. cit., pp.1175-6.

2. Where yogis stay and dance about.

It seems that our poet has a great appreciation for genuine yogis, to whom he pays generous tribute throughout the above-mentioned *surs*, because of their philosophy of selflessness, non-violence and non-attachment, in contrast to selfishness and violence. This does not, however, mean that he believes that all yogis are genuine, and he roundly condemns the false ones.

Moreover, there is no evidence from his work to suggest that he agrees with yogis on the cycle of rebirth. As regards the spiritual journey of the soul, our poet agrees with the yogis, but that journey is also accepted by Muslim Sufis. It seems that Shah Abd al-Latif believes in the journey within one's own self, and in the spiritual development of a person that is within his lifetime.

Shah Abd al-Latif spent three years with yogis, with whom he gained valuable experience and from whom he learnt lessons in the field of spirituality. He then came back to convey his message to the people, a message gleaned from his own experience.

As has already been emphasised, Shah Abd al-Latif is not a narrow doctrinaire theologian: whilst it is true that he speaks specifically of yogis in two *surs* of the *Risalo*, even here there are obvious parallels to be drawn between them and Sufis. As for the rest of his poetry, it would be safe to say that Shah Abd al-Latif sees both yogis and Sufis as sharing many of the same characteristics in the same search for the divine. Indeed, it is almost as if they are one and the same thing in his poetry, which rises above religious differences and goes to the heart of the individual's seeking after true religion.

CHAPTER 4

A COMPARISON BETWEEN THE POETRY OF SHAH ABD AL-LATIF AND THAT OF FARID AL-DIN ATTAR

It is generally accepted that Shah Abd al-Latif knew Arabic and Persian quite well and that he must have been acquainted with the great Sufi writers of the Middle Ages, such as al-Sarraj al-Tusi, al-Hujwiri, al-Suhrawardi and others. Above all, it is certain that he had read the *Masnawi* of Jalal al-Din Rumi since there are direct references to it in the *Risalo*.¹

As for the work of Farid al-Din Attar, it is not certain that Shah Abd al-Latif had read it, although it is quite likely that this was the case. Rumi had a high regard for Attar and since Shah Abd al-Latif was such an admirer of Rumi's work it may well be that he had followed Rumi's example and read the poetry of Attar. Shah Abd al-Latif must have come across the famous saying of Rumi's:—²

Sana'i was the spirit, and Attar his two eyes; We
have come after Sana'i and Attar.

Whether or not there is proof that Shah Abd al-Latif read the work of Attar, it is of some interest to make a close comparison between the poetry of these two poets. The comparison which follows is between the *Risalo* and the *Mantiq al-Tair* of Attar.³

Before embarking on a more detailed comparison between the two works, it is perhaps useful to summarise the salient points of the plot of *Mantiq al-Tair*. One day all the birds of world assembled at a certain place, and expressed their concern at not having a king who could look after them and administer their affairs. Thousands of birds were present, including the nightingale, the

1. For a detailed discussion of this question, cf. Chapter 5 of this thesis.

2. Schimmel, A.M., *The Triumphal Sun*, London and The Hague, 1980, p.37.

3. Attar, Farid al-Din, *Mantiq al-Tair*, Tehran 1929, ed. Gauharin Sayyid Sadiq.

parrot, the peacock, the duck, the partridge, the humay, the hawk, the heron, the owl, the sparrow, the hoopoe and several others.

The hoopoe then came forward and told all the birds that it knew of a king whose name was Simurgh. It described to them the manifold qualities of Simurgh and volunteered to guide them to find him. The hoopoe¹ considered itself worthy to lead them because it claimed to have knowledge about the secrets of God and the creation of the world. All the birds became very enthusiastic at the idea of setting out on a journey to meet their king Simurgh.

The hoopoe warned them beforehand of all the hardships they would encounter on the journey and told them that they should be ready for every kind of sacrifice, even if it meant their lives. The hoopoe told the birds that there were seven valleys to be crossed before they could reach their beloved Simurgh.

After hearing from the hoopoe about the adverse circumstances they were going to face, several birds began to make excuses for not being able to set out on the journey. Although the hoopoe encouraged them, many refused to go. Nevertheless, there were still thousands of birds who started the journey. Many were killed during the journey or were lost on the way.

Thus, out of thousands of birds who started the journey, only thirty reached the desired goal. When they reached their destination, they discovered that what they were seeking for was none other than themselves. Indeed Si-murgh in Persian means thirty birds.

The journey of the birds is used by Farid al-Din Attar to symbolise the journey of the *salik* in the various stages through which he has to pass before attaining self-realisation. Shah Abd al-Latif also speaks of the journey of the *salik*, a journey which he represents by the search of his heroines for their beloved. The stories of Sasui and Suhni are especially appropriate in this context as they both set out on a journey in search of their love.

1. The hoopoe is important because it was the messenger of Solomon and it is mentioned in the Qur'an.

With reference to Sasui there are five *surs* which speak of her journey and the hardships she has to go through during her travels. According to the story, Sasui is married to Punhu without the prior consent of her in-laws who belong to a higher stratum of society than she does. One day her brothers-in-law come to visit them and stay the night. When she wakes up in the morning, she discovers that her brothers-in-law have taken her husband away from her. This separation from her beloved husband makes her restless and overcome with sorrow. She then decides to set out on a journey to find him again. Throughout the five *surs* which are devoted to the story of Sasui, the poet refers to the agony which she undergoes through separation from Punhu and he highlights Sasui's determination to attain her goal irrespective of the hardships involved. The poet depicts her longing and hope for Punhu even after her death.¹

As for Suhni the second heroine of Shah Abd al-Latif who travels, her journey is of a different kind. According to the story, Suhni, who is already in love with Mehar, is married by force to Dam. The poet speaks at length of her sorrows caused by the separation from her beloved, and the obstacles which she faces on her way to meet Mehar. The poet describes how, in spite of the dangers involved, Suhni swims across the river every night to meet her beloved and how she returns at dawn. The story ends in tragedy when Suhni finds herself in difficulties in the river, Mehar jumps in to rescue her and both are drowned. Thus they attain their union after death.

From this brief outline of the birds' journey from *Mantiq al-Tair* and the relevant two stories from the *Risalo*, we find certain similarities between the two works. Both poets use the symbol of a journey in a *Sufi* context. This of course is a stock theme. For example, Sana'i's small *masnavi* is based on this theme. Its title is *Sair al-ibād ila'l-ma'ad* ('The journey of the servant towards the place of return'). In this book the poet describes the return of the soul through different stages of life towards its original

1. For the full story, cf. Appendix.

source.¹ Moreover, Farid al-Din Attar is said to have followed the same tradition for *Mantiq al-Tair*. Whereas, however, Attar uses birds which is a common motif in Persian poetry before him to denote the soul, as indeed do Avicenna and al-Ghazali,² Shah Abd al-Latif prefers to take the heroines Sasui and Suhni as allegories of the soul on its journey.

According to Hindu (*yoga*) philosophy the human soul which is likened to a woman who is separated from her lawful husband, the Brahma, the Great Soul (i.e. God), has to struggle for re-union.³ The story of Sasui fits very aptly with the above mentioned imagery. It would appear that Shah Abd al-Latif uses the same idea of the soul as a woman, a concept which is already adopted by his predecessors, Shah Abd al-Karim of Bulri and Shah Inayat Rizvi, who also utilise the concept of a journey. So Shah Abd al-Latif may be seen to draw on two traditions and to display in his work an amalgamation of Hindu and Muslim ideas.

Both Shah Abd al-Latif and Farid al-Din Attar represent in their poetry the Sufi concept of the search of the soul for divine union. In the *Risalo* heroines from Sindhi folk stories are used allegorically to represent spiritual seekers, as are the birds in the work of Attar. The purpose behind Shah Abd al-Latif's allegorical use of these heroines is probably to bring the complicated and abstract ideas of Sufism into a more substantial form, for easier comprehension by ordinary people. The heroines represent the *salik* or seeker, whose soul is always restless, yearning and suffering in separation from the beloved. The beloved represents God, the eternal origin and home of the soul. The soul is always striving to attain union with its source.

Another less obvious similarity between the two poets is the use of *Sufi maqams* in their respective works. With Attar all seven *maqams* are discussed clearly and explicitly with headings and in sequence. In Shah Abd al-Latif's work, although it may be

1. Schimmel, A.M., *Mystical Dimensions of Islam*, Chapel Hill, 1978, pp.302-3.

2. Ibid., p.307.

3. Oman, J.C., *The Mystics, Ascetics and Saints of India*, Delhi, 1973, p.171.

argued that he alludes to seven *maqams*, they are not in any systematic order as in *Mantiq al-Tair*. On the contrary they are found scattered throughout the *Risalo*. The whole question will be discussed at length in this chapter.

So much for certain broad similarities between the *Risalo* and *Mantiq al-Tair*. We now turn to important differences between the two works. In *Mantiq al-Tair* numerous birds gather around the hoopoe whom they acknowledge as their guide on the journey. Just as a *murshid* is required by a *salik* on his path of spirituality, so the hoopoe acts in a similar manner for the birds. The hoopoe has, of course, deep religious significance for Muslim poets. The Qur'an mentions the hoopoe as having been in the company of Solomon and having brought him messages from the Queen of Sheba.¹

Shah Abd al-Latif' on the other hand, has a rather different approach with his heroines. When Sasui and Suhni set out on their journey they do not have a guide. With reference to Suhni he comments:

هُنِّي طَالِبٌ حَقٍّ جِي، تَوَدِّي لَاقُونَ تَوَدَّ،
 نَه مَلَّاحُ نَه مَكْرِي، نَكِينُ نَوَدَّ،
 پَاڻِي پَنِي ٻُوڙ، سُهڻِي لِيڪِي سِيرَ مَ.

From the beginning Todi² has been the seeker after
 Truth

She does not ask for the sailor, the boat, or
 the rope,

When Suhni is in the middle of the river,
 to her the water seems only knee high.³

1. Quran: xxvii. 22-26, and xxvii, 22-44.

2. I.e., Suhni

3. Gurbukhshani, op. cit., p.261.

In other *surs* Shah Abd al-Latif stresses that one should take a sailor as guide while crossing the river or the seas. But for Suhni he says that her quest for love or Truth is so great that she does not seek assistance of any kind, nor does she ask anyone to guide her. The poet believes that her love and personal determination are enough to guide her. Indeed he makes Suhni rebuke those who seek for assistance:

ڪونه آڳهه اهڙو، جهڙي محبت من،
 اُپيون اوريين پار ڏي، ڪوڙيون ڪڪ پڇن،
 نڌي تن نير ٿيبي، جي ري ترهي ترن،
 سڪ رسائي، سهڻي! اصل عاشقن،
 سي جهليون ڪين ڪنن، پڇن جي ميهار ڪي.

There is no support better than the love within
 one's heart.

They (the women), the false ones, are standing on
 this side of the bank (of the river) and are
 asking for straws.¹

The river becomes a trench to those who swim
 without a raft.

Suhni's longing has accomplished it (the task),
 yearning is the characteristic of lovers.

Those who seek Mehar are not stopped by
 whirlpools.²

In the case of Sasui, since she does not have any guide, she asks animate and inanimate objects the whereabouts of her beloved. While she passes through the mountains and forests, she requests them to be kind to her and to show her the way:-

1. I.e. a raft or anything used to cross the river.

2. Gurbukshani, op. cit., p.258.

وارو! مون وٽراه! ڪا سڌ سنهپ جي نه ڏهو؟
 وجھي وراڪن ۾، معذور کي مَر مُنجهاءُ
 منجها پاڻ پياڏيئون، هاڏي ٿي هلاءُ
 پريان کي پھچاءُ تہ لڳي لولو نہ ٿين.

Vegetable kingdom! O why don't you guide me?
 Do not confuse this wretch by your windings and
 twists.

You should show the way, to the traveller on foot,
 like a guide.

Help me to reach my beloved,
 before you wither away.¹

Occasionally the poet shows these heroines calling to their beloveds. Both of them call to their respective beloved to come and assist her in hard times. This implies that for Shah Abd al-Latif, the beloved can be treated as a guide, but it should be stressed that his presence with the traveller is not necessary. With reference to Sasui he says:

ڪرڙا ڏونگر، ڪه گهڻي، جت بر پت بيران،
 ڏاهن ڏاهپ وسري، ٿئا حريف ٿي حيران،
 سسئي لنگهڻو سيد چي، محبت سين ميدان،
 جه جو آرياڻي اڳواڻ، ته جي ڪانه باڪ بهير ۾.

The walk (i.e. journey) is long and the mountains
 are harsh

1. Gurbukhshani, op. cit., p.313.

(It is known that) desert and desolation lie ahead.
Where wise ones forget their wisdom and the
knowledgeable are bewildered.

Sasui crossed the arena* (i.e. accomplished the
journey) out of love, says Sayyid.¹

She whose guide is Aryani² has no danger in his
company.³

At other times the poet intervenes himself. When his heroines are in trouble or are feeling distressed, he gives them advice and comforts them with kind words of encouragement. Sometimes he even accuses them of negligence and warns them of the forthcoming dangers. His advice to them is that of a good friend and there is warmth and tenderness in his words.

For example, when Sasui is travelling through the forests, mountains and plains, the poet addresses her with words of encouragement, advice and sympathy:⁴

آڏو ٽڏو اڀري، سَڌَرِ ٿِي سڄِي،
سُڀَڪَ ٿِي، سَيِّدُ چِي، پَهِنَ مَنجھ پڄِي،
مَعذُورِ تي مارو ڪيو، اولاڪَن اڄِي،
مَنجھان رَاهَ رَچِي، ٿِيڙِي لال، لَطِيفُ چِي.

* arena is a place where tournaments are fought, i.e. a heroic place.

1. i.e. Shah Abd al-Latif himself, who was a Sayyid.

2. i.e. Punhu, her beloved husband.

3. Gurbukhshani, op. cit., p.336.

4. Advani, op. cit., p.145.

Forlorn, defenceless and weak woman,
 Gain strength with sincerity
 Cook yourself within the stones (i.e. mountain),
 says Sayyid, and become matured.
 The helpless one has been confronted with affliction.
 Latif says, the path has enriched her, and she
 has become red (i.e. attained perfection)
 honored.

In contrast to the *Risalo*, the hoopoe in *Mantiq al-Tair* plays a major role. It gives instructions to the other birds, who have accepted it as their leader. Its speeches, which are long and full of wise advice, sound like a discourse or sermon delivered by a *Shaikh* or *murshid* for the guidance of his *murids*. The hoopoe relates to the birds anecdotes from the lives of Sufis and saints and concludes with a moral. It warns them of forthcoming difficulties on the path, and advises them to prepare themselves for every kind of sacrifice. After hearing from the hoopoe about hardships on the way, several birds begin to present excuses to withdraw from the journey. At this stage, once again the hoopoe comes up with encouragement to the birds in the same way as a *murshid* would do in such a situation.

He who prefers the Simurgh to his own life must
 struggle bravely with himself. If your gizzard will
 not digest a single grain how shall you share in
 the feasting of the Simurgh? When you hesitate
 over a sip of wine how will you drink a large cup,
 O paladin? If you have not the energy of an atom
 how shall you find the treasure of the sun?..This
 is not a simple perfume, and neither is it a task
 for him who has not a clean face.¹

From the hoopoe's words one can feel the distance between
 a *murshid* and a *murid*.

1. Attar, *The Conference of the Birds, Mantiq al-Tair*, London 1961,
 trans C.S. Nott, p.29.

The question of Shah Abd al-Latif's heroines not having a guide, as the birds do in the *Mantiq al-Tair*, may well reflect on the lives of the two poets themselves. Whereas Attar became a pupil of a learned *shaikh* and was initiated into Sufism, there is no reference to a living *murshid* or *shaikh* in relation to Shah Abd al-Latif.

Another significant difference between the journey of the birds of Attar and the heroines of Shah Abd al-Latif is one of number. Thousands of birds congregate around the hoopoe who is their leader. In the case of Sasui and Suhni, each one travels all by herself without any guide and without friends to accompany her. In the case of Sasui it appears that some of her friends do suggest to her that they should accompany her. She rejects this offer saying that it is exclusively her own duty and desire to go alone:

وَجُو سڀ وَرِي، ائين جي وَرَن واريُون،
 قوڙائي فِراقَ جي، سُڃي ڳالَ ڳري،
 بُنيا جَن ٻري، ڏنگرَ سي ڏورينديُون.

All you who have husbands, must return back
 It is a trial of strength, to be separated from the
 beloved
 The ones who are burnt from within will cross the
 mountain.¹

It seems that Sasui's mother may have been concerned about her daughter and warned her of the forthcoming dangers on the journey. Although the poet does not bring her mother onto the scene to prevent her from setting out, Sasui's reply to her mother reveals that the latter may have tried to stop her from going. The poet puts these words in the mouth of Sasui:

1. Gurbukhshani, op. cit., p.290.

اَڄَ مَلِينْدِيسَ، ما! ڏاڄا ڪنڊيسَ ڪَپَڙا،
جِيجا! جوڳياڻي ٿيان، مُونَ کي جَهَلَ مَ پاءِ،
هُوَتَ پُروڇي لاءِ ڪَنين ڪُنِرَ پائِيان.

O mother! I will wash¹ today, and dye my clothes
an ochre colour.²

Dear mother! do not stop me, for I am going to
become a yogni³

I will wear earrings⁴ in my ears my beloved
Baloch.⁵

In the above verse one can see Sasui's determination to go after Punhu, forsaking every other relationship. She is requesting her mother not to create hindrances for her.

One also finds verses in response to her friends' suggestions. Again, the friends are in the background; one only hears Sasui speaking:

پنھوءَ سِينَ پريتِ جو، ڪو جو پيڇ پئوَمِ،
پيئي هِنَ پنيورَ مِ، وهڻُ وَهَ ٿوَمِ،
مَتِيونَ موٽَڻَ سَنديُون، ڪاڪيون! ڪيمَ ڏئوَمِ،
سَرَتِيُون! ساھُ سَنڊوَمِ، ٿئو حَوَالي هُوَتَ جِي.

1. Here 'washing' suggests the need to purify oneself before setting out on the spiritual journey.
2. Ochre-coloured clothes are worn by yogis, symbol of simplicity and detachment from worldly desires.
3. 'Yogni' is a word used for a female yogi, who is not attached to any relations or belongings.
4. The earrings worn by yogis.
5. Gurbukhshani, op. cit., p.290.

My intense love for Punhu, has made my living in
 this wretched Bhambhore¹ an affliction.
 O companions! do not advise me to return.
 Friends! my soul is in the possession of my
 beloved.²

On several other occasions the poet points out that it is her love for Punhu that gives strength to Sasui. Shah Abd al-Latif expresses her determination in the following lines:

هَلَنْدِي هَوَتْ پُنْهوءَ ڏي، ڪُهَجَن ڪي ڪوٽِيُون،
 پَهِن تَنِين پَتُ ٿِي، جي لاءِ لالَن لوڻِيُون،
 سڀ سَهِيلِيُون سَڪَ ڪي، چُنجهُون ۽ چوڻِيُون،
 ٻانڀِيَن! ٿِي هَوِيُون، تہ ڪتا ڪيئي ڪيچ جا.

While walking towards Punhu, the insincere ones
 are exhausted;
 The stones³ become plains for the ones who wander
 for the beloved.
 In love all the friends are short-sighted and
 weak-hearted.⁴
 Brahman!⁵ become pieces so that the dogs of Kech⁶
 may eat you.⁷

1. Home town of Sasui.
2. Gurbukhshani, op. cit., p.337.
3. I.e. the mountain.
4. I.e. mere pretenders on the journey who cannot comprehend the Truth.
5. I.e. Sasui was a Brahman girl by birth but was brought up by a washer woman.
6. Kech was the home of Punhu, Sasui's beloved husband.
7. Gurbukhshani, op. cit., p.309.

As for Suhni, she is a married woman and her husband, friends and neighbours accuse her and try to prevent her from going to Mehar. Even the forces of nature are against her, for the rough river stands as a barrier between her and her beloved. But the poet says:

نڪا جهولَ جَهلِس، نَه تانگهو نَه تارِ ڪين،
 ڏمُڙ ڏيهائي ڪيترو، پَر مَر تو پليس،
 تان تان جي جليس، ملي جان نَه ميهار ڪي.

Neither deep nor shallow, nor overflowing water
 can stop her

Everyday, Dam is prohibiting her in several ways
 Her life keeps burning until she meets Mehar.¹

Dam who is Suhni's husband, does all he can to stop her from visiting Mehar. Moreover her friends and neighbours make things worse by not only blaming her for being unfaithful to her husband, but by creating obstacles for her. As Suhni says:

تران تان مَـرَـان، وِـرَـان تان وِـرَـو،
 هينَڙي مَر هوتن جا، اچن گهورَ گهڻان،
 پَسَـئو پاڙي واريون، ڏسـئو ڏوہ ڏران،
 وِـجـان ڪن وِـرَـان، ڪنـڌي مُنهنجو ڪارڙي.

If I swim, that will bring death,
 Returning will drown me in distress.
 Within my heart are many longings for my beloved

1. Gurbukhshani, op. cit., p.262.

The sight of the neighbouring (women) is making
me dread my faults.

How could I return? While my support (Mehar) is
on the other bank (of the river).¹

Thus the heroines, Sasui and Suhni, are without friends or guide and harassed by obstacles. It is only their personal determination which keeps them going on their journey. For Shah Abd al-Latif clearly, there is great emphasis laid on self-reliance and individual effort on the part of the seeker.

In *Mantiq al-Tair* there are no such hindrances from outside. The hoopoe, who fulfils the role of *murshid*, is seen encouraging the birds but in spite of this encouragement there are many moments of weakness on the part of the seeker. The birds are seen coming up with various excuses and expressing their inability to leave the place and the possessions which they treasure. For example the nightingale presents its excuses to the hoopoe in the following words:²

The journey to Simurgh is beyond my strength;
the love of the Rose is enough for the Nightingale.

Occasionally the hoopoe sounds disappointed with the birds, who do not have enough longing to make them lovers. Like a teacher or a guide, it criticises and reproaches them thus:

O birds without aspiration! How shall love spring
bountifully in a heart devoid of sensibility? Beg-
ging the question like this, which seems to gratify
you, will result in nothing. He who loves sets out
with open eyes towards his goal making a playing
of his life.³

1. Ibid., p.278.

2. Attar, Farid al-Din, *The Conference of the Birds* (Mantiq al-Tair), London, 1961, trans C.S. Nott, p.5.

3. Nott, op. cit., p.30. Cf. Attar, op. cit., p.66.

Thus a comparison of these two heroines with Attar's birds reveals that Shah Abd al-Latif wishes to lay emphasis on the part of the seeker. Unlike birds, who need a guide to remind them what they should or should not do, Sasui and Suhni are keen themselves and in spite of all odds they overcome everything that stands in their way and achieve union with the beloved. For Attar the guidance of the spiritual master is necessary, as well as sacrifices on the part of the individual.

We now turn to a more detailed analysis of *maqams* in the works of Attar and Shah Abd al-Latif. As is well known, the classification and even the sequence of *maqams* vary from one Sufi writer to another. According to al-Sarraj Tusi, for example, there are seven *maqams* but they are different from those mentioned by Attar.²

Seven Sufi *maqams*, known as valleys in *Mantiq al-Tair*, are enumerated in systematic order. In the poetry of Shah Abd al-Latif, on the other hand, one does not find such an orderly presentation of *maqams* but there are verses scattered all over the *Risalo* which can be interpreted as *maqams*. More especially, if one studies the journeys of Sasui and Suhni, one can find *maqams* parallel to those in *Mantiq al-Tair*, although the sequence is different in the work of the two poets.

1. For al-Sarraj Tusi the *maqams* are:

- | | |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| a. repentance (<i>tauba</i>) | |
| b. abstinence (<i>wara'</i>) | f. trust in God (<i>tawakku'</i>) |
| c. renunciation (<i>zuho</i>) | g. contentment (<i>riza</i>) |
| d. poverty (<i>faqir</i>) | |
| e. patience (<i>sabr</i>) | |

² al-Sarraj Tusi, Ibn Nasr, *Kitabal-Luma' fi'l-tasawwuf*, ed. Nicholson, R.A., London, 1914, pp.15-16.

In *Mantiq al-Tair* the *maqams* are outlined as follows:¹

1. The valley of quest (talab)
2. The valley of love (ishq)
3. The valley of knowledge and understanding (ma'rifa)
4. The valley of detachment and independence (istighna)
5. The valley of unity (tauhid)
6. The valley of astonishment or bewilderment (haira)
7. The valley of annihilation (fana')

In *Mantiq al-Tair* the hoopoe which acts as the guide for the birds is seen giving information on each valley in systematic order. As already mentioned, the hoopoe's way of addressing the birds resembles that of the *murshid* giving instructions to his pupils or followers. After the hoopoe's direct speech, there and then follows a number of anecdotes relating to each valley. Most of the time the narrator appears to be the hoopoe but on occasion the poet himself seems to be speaking directly to the birds. He then reminds himself to go back to the hoopoe which then continues its discourse.

In the work of Shah Abd al-Latif, on the other hand, Sasui and Suhni do not have a guide to give them instructions about the Sufi *maqam* or stages. Nevertheless, the seven sufi *maqams* are alluded to and the poet comments through Sasui and Suhni as they pass through each stage. For Shah Abd al-Latif the exposition of the seven *maqams* is represented as more of an experience than instruction. His heroines express their feelings on each stage interspersed with occasional advice from the poet

1. Nott, op. cit., p.98.

Cf. Attar, op. cit., p.180.

himself. This is quite different from the hoopoe who continually warns the birds beforehand of the forthcoming dangers of each stage which they then experience personally.

The following seven *maqams* have been extracted mostly from *Sur Sasui* and *Sur Suhni* of the *Risalo* of Shah Abd al-Latif. They appear to be the same as those in *Mantiq al-Tair* but differ in sequence:

1. The *maqam* of love
2. The *maqam* of quest
3. The *maqam* of detachment or independence
4. The *maqam* of astonishment and bewilderment
5. The *maqam* of knowledge, understanding and gnosis
6. The *maqam* of unity
7. The *maqam* of annihilation.

This suggested sequence of *maqams* comes from an analysis of the stories of Sasui and Suhni. These two heroines are shown to be in love in the first place and their quest comes later, when they are separated from their loved ones. So in this case quest follows love. When the heroines set out on their journey, they have to detach themselves from family, friends and everything which may hold them back from their beloved. Thus the *maqam* of detachment comes third here.

While in search of her beloved, Sasui is bewildered when she passes through mountains, valleys and desert. After Suhni leaves her home, husband, and friends behind, her beloved is on the opposite bank of the river, the night is dark and there is no help around. Her earthenware jar breaks in the middle of the river and the length and breadth of the river bewilder her. In this way our poet highlights the stage or *maqam* of bewilderment through these two heroines.

After this perplexity experienced by Sasui and Suhni, they attain knowledge, or understanding (gnosis). This is knowledge of themselves, a self-realisation which leads them to an understanding of the divine nature. It is at this stage that our poet makes Sasui say these words.¹

پُنھو تيس پاڻھين، ويئي سسي جي سونه،
 خلق آدم علي صورتہ، اي وٽن منجھ ورونہ،
 چري منجھا چونہ، کٽي هوت هنج ڪئو.

I have become Punhu myself, and Sasui has lost
 her beauty

'God created man in His image'

The trees are uttering that tune.

The crazy woman² has found her beloved from
 within and has taken him in her lap.

Shah Abd al-Latif suggests that once the seeker attains self-realisation, he or she proceeds towards unity, which is the sixth *maqam*.

Sasui and Suhni apparently do not reach their beloveds in their life-time, but they do realise the secret of unity. With reference to the *maqam* of unity, our poet suggests that unity should be sought from within and not from without. Once again he makes his heroines come up with the answer to the intricate question of unity, e.g:

هوت تنھجي هنج ۾ پڇين ڪو ٻھي؟
 وڃي اُنفسڪم، افلا تبصرون، سوڃھي ڪر سھي،
 ڪڏھ ڪانہ وڃي، هوت ڳولڻ هٿ تي.

1. Gurbukhshani, op. cit., p.293.

2. Sasui is calling herself crazy, because love of Punhu has made her mad.

The beloved is in your lap, why are you asking
 from others?
 As also in your own selves: will ye not then see?
 You have to search for it.
 Nobody has gone in search of the beloved in a
 shop.¹

Finally both heroines, Sasui and Suhni, meet their death while still on their journey. Thus one finds the heroines of Shah Abd al-Latif reaching the final stage (*maqam*) of annihilation.

There now follows a more detailed comparison between the *maqams* outlined by Attar and those which may be discerned in the poetry of Shah Abd al-Latif.

The Valley of Quest

Attar and Shah Abd al-Latif both speak of a quest and of the hardships which the seeker encounters on his path. Both suggest that the seeker should detach himself/herself from the worldly life to reach the desired goal. They also agree on the point that the seeker should not be afraid of the forthcoming dangers and obstacles on his path. The method of presentation of both authors is, however, different in their respective works.

In *Mantiq al-Tair*, the valley of quest is the first *maqam*. The birds represent the *salik* and are in search of an unknown beloved or king. With Shah Abd al-Latif, on the other hand, the quest is the second *maqam*, since his heroines are in love first and are then separated from their beloveds. This compels them to set out in search of them.

1. Q:Li. 21.

2. Gurbukhshani, op. cit., p.293.

Attar points out that in the beginning the birds are anxious and wonder why they do not have a king. Then their curiosity is increased by the hoopoe (who represents the murshid) who tells them about the *simurgh* but they themselves have not seen the king.¹

Shah Abd al-Latif's heroines do not obtain information about their beloved from a third person. Their quest and longing is the result of love and an actual experience, which does not allow them to bear any separation from their beloveds.

In Attar the hoopoe addresses the birds and gives them instructions as to what they should do. It tells the other birds that they should prepare themselves for every difficulty on the pilgrimage. The hoopoe informs the other birds about this *maqam*. It tells the birds that when you enter the first valley of quest, you will be confronted with hundreds of difficulties and undergo numerous trials. You will be required to put a great effort before any progress could be seen. You have to give up every possession and detach yourself from everything, then only you will be able to see the pure light of Divine Majesty, and your wishes will be fulfilled. He who enters this valley, will be ever longing and in quest, and ask for the wine. After drinking the wine they fear nothing, except pursuing his true aim.²

In the work of Shah Abd al-Latif, the heroines themselves are aware of the hardships and hindrances without being told of them. Sometimes the poet himself describes the situation in which the heroines find themselves. At other times Sasui and Suhni themselves refer to the emotions and experiences which they are undergoing at that time. In the case of Sasui she is aware that it is not an easy journey, as not only do her brothers-in-law stand between her and Punhu but it seems also that all natural objects are against her. Our poet describes her plight in the following words:

1. Attar, op. cit., pp.80-81.

2. Nott, op. cit., p.98.

Cf. Attar, op. cit., pp.180-81.

وڏا وڻ وڻڪار جا، چيوُن جت چيها،
 منزل دُورُ، مَن تنها، اُت ٻوليون ڪن پيها،
 رائي پير رتُ ڪئا، لڳي لُڪَ ڏيها،
 لَڪن جيون ليها، لوڙهيان لال لَطيفُ چي.

There are the tall trees of Wankar¹ where only
 owls² and *beha* are found
 In my loneliness, my destination being far away.
 I can hear only the screeching of chiha³
 The gravel stones have made my feet bleed,

Latif says:

She is suffering hardships while passing
 through the mountains and there is a hot
 wind throughout the day.⁴

While discussing the quest, Shah Abd al-Latif distinguishes
 between those who are true lovers and those who are fraudulent.
 In *Sur Suhni* he comments on them thus:-

ڪَنڌِي اُڀيون ڪيتريون، ”ساهڙُ ساهڙُ“ ڪن،
 ڪَنِين سانگو ساهه جو، ڪي ”گهوريس“ ڪئو گهرن،
 ساهڙُ سَندو تن، گهاگهاڻي گهرن جي.

1. The name of woodland.
2. The owl and the *beha* are said to be unlucky birds and several bad omens and anecdotes are associated with them.
3. The name of a small reddish spotted bird.
4. Shahvani, op. cit., p.389.

While standing on the bank (of the river) several
(women) call out Sahar Sahar.¹

Some are concerned for their own lives,
Others just jump in, saying 'let me be the
sacrifice'

Sahar is for those who enter (the deep waters)
with a smile.²

Thus true lovers are not afraid of any sacrifice they have to
make in search of their beloved.

In the above verses our poet refers to Suhni who embarks
on a genuine quest to meet her beloved. She does not think about
the consequences, nor is she daunted by the inevitable dangers
encountered on her way. Her only concern and heart's desire is
to reach Mehar. In another verse the poet expresses his idea
more clearly in the following passage:

ڪه ڇه گهٽر گهٽري، جنءِ اوترا تر ٿئوس،
سالم ويئي سهڻي، ڪنن ڪين ڪئوس،
آهس آڪرين ۾، پريان جو پئوس،
حقا حق ٿئوس، هئي طالب حق جي.

Suhni has entered (the river) from the dangerous
landing place

But it turns out to be favourable for her.

Suhni crosses (the river) safely, and the whirlpool
does not harm her.

She attains the light of her beloved which shines
in her eyes.

As she is seeking for the Truth,
The Truth does justice by her.³

1. Sahar refers to Mehar, Suhni's beloved. For the story of Suhni, cf. Appendix.

2. Gurbukhshani, op. cit., p.256.

3. Gurbukhshani, op. cit., p.261.

Sasui has several friends who wish to accompany her on her journey, as do the numerous birds in *Mantiq al-Tair*. But she warns them of the obstacles on the path, and the misfortunes which they may have to face. After hearing about these hardships, most of the women give up the idea of this journey as do most of the birds. But here the warning is not from the guide but from the *salik*. The poet comments on this in the following words:

دُونِ گَر نہ دُورِي، سَنَکَنَ جِيُونِ سَدُونِ کَرِي،
وِينِي گَهرِ گَهورِي، مَتَاءِ پَرِينِ جِنْدَرُو.

They do not search in the mountains¹
They merely wish to search
They sit at home and (pretend to) sacrifice their
lives for the beloved.

In the above verse we are given an example of false seekers on the Sufi path, who apparently make a show of being in search of the truth.

Shah Abd al-Latif seems to believe that not everyone can claim to be a *salik*, prepared to set out on the journey. Only a few have the courage to give up everything else for the one Beloved (i.e. God). Sasui is remarkable among hundreds of other women for her courage. Her quest for the beloved is so great that she cannot be deterred from facing any kind of difficulty.

جِي سَجَهَائِي سَکَ، تہ پڻ سِکِي سَسِي،
پِيتائين پنھوءَ سِين، هَذِ نہ پِگِيسَ هِکَ،
اِن تَرِ مَنجھا تِکَ، دُني پان اَج تِي.

1. Gurbukhshani, op. cit., p.290.

Out of longing, Sasui is on fire and still yearning,
 She has drunk in the company of Punhu.
 Her thirst remains unquenched for ever.
 Whoever has had a sip from that stream will
 always be thirsty.¹

Attar also speaks of false seekers. He mentions certain birds who show enthusiasm to search for their king, but begin to make excuses when they hear of the hardships.

For Shah Abd al-Latif there is a further aspect to the quest. When the lover seeks the beloved, according to Shah Abd al-Latif the beloved also responds by seeking him or her. For example:

مِيهَارُ مَلَا حَنِّ كِي، اُيُو كَرِي سَدَّ
 اَدَا! اِنْهِيَن پَارَ جَا، مَوَّرِي اچو مَدَّ
 وَثَا جِي وَهَ گَدَّ، هَلُو تَه دَوَرِيُون اُنَ كِي.

Mehar is standing and calling the sailors.
 Brothers on the other side,
 Turn and bring your rafts
 Let us search for the one who has gone with the
 current.²

In this verse there is clearly some involvement on the part of Mehar (i.e. the beloved) as well. In *Mantiq al-Tair*, on the other hand, the role of the *Simurgh* is passive. It is interesting to speculate what such a difference in attitude on the part of the beloved implies in the minds of the two poets under discussion. Shah Abd al-Latif's Beloved is here seen to be willing and interested in seeking out those who seek Him, whereas for Attar the Beloved seems remote.

1. Gurbukhshani, op. cit., p.284.
 Attar, op. cit., p.42.

2. Gurbukhshani, op. cit., p.273.

THE VALLEY OF LOVE

In Attar's work this is the second valley or stage on the Sufi path. The hoopoe, as mentioned earlier, being a guide to other birds, gives them instructions in a long discourse regarding this valley. It tells them what love is and the sacrifices involved on its path. It enumerates the requirements of that valley and explains what a true lover would have to undergo before he attains the desired goal.

In *Mantiq al-Tair* the hoopoe, while describing love to other birds, explains to them:

You are neither experienced nor in love
 You are dead, how can you be worthy of love!
 He who is on this path, should be alive with a
 thousand lives
 So that he can sacrifice one at every moment.¹

The hoopoe tells them that love is impulsive and can be likened to fire. Just as fire knows no limitations, and burns everything without distinction, so too love does not wait or reason why. For a lover good and evil have no meaning.²

In the work of Attar the hoopoe is found telling the other birds about the burning quality of love, which does not listen to reason. In the poetry of Shah Abd al-Latif, however, Sasui and Suhni prove through their own actions that love does not care for any reason.

Suhni's love for Mehar may well be likened to a fire, which knows no bounds. She loses all sense of reason and does not care what neighbours, friends, and even her husband says to her.

1. Attar, op. cit., p.187.

2. Ibid., p.186-7.
 Cf. Nott, op. cit., p.102.

Her only desire and aim is to see Mehar, for whom she gives up everything, even her life. She takes pride in what a reasonable person would consider an act of shame:

جيهر لوڪ جهٻ ڪري، ذرو جاڳ نہ هوءَ
 اوهير آچئو، آديون! پنه پريان جو پوءِ
 جي ڪچو چوٽير ڪوءِ، ته مرڪ پايان مهٽو.

When the people are fast asleep,
 At that time, O sisters! I think about my beloved
 Even when they blame me,
 I regard the accusation as an honour.¹

In the poetry of Shah Abd al-Latif, the same requirements are expected for the lover, but the seekers are not given instructions by anybody else. They themselves are aware of what they must do, and are prepared for any danger that they have to face. Sometimes the poet does warn the heroines who represent the seeker, but again it is not a long discourse. Short hints only are given to them.

As mentioned earlier, in Shah Abd al-Latif's work love is the first *maqam* and the motivating factor for the search on the Sufi path. His heroines who represent the seekers are already in love before they start the journey. Therefore their restlessness is due to separation from the beloved, as one can see from the verse given below.

جهلي تان نہ رھان، ڌارا پسڻ پريءَ جي،
 اُپر عاجز آھيان، لالن جان نہ لھان،

1. Gurbukhshani, op.cit., p.268.

فَرَدَا مُوْنِ قَتِي كِي، وَعَدِي دِي نِه وَهَان،
صَبَاحَ سِينِءِ نِه سَهَان، خَوَاهِ مِيرِينِ، خَوَاهِ مَارِينِ.

When restricted, I cannot refrain from (going) till
the time I meet my beloved.
I will continue to be tormented,
until I attain my sweetheart.
I have rejected the tomorrow, nor will I wait for
the promise.¹
It is up to them, whether they unite with me or
kill me.
I cannot put it off till the morning.²

In the above verse one can see the intensity of the love which Sasui has for Punhu. Sasui's love for Punhu or Suhni's love for Mehar, as presented by Shah Abd al-Latif, is different from the love mentioned in *Mantiq al-Tair*. In the latter work, the hoopoe is talking or giving a discourse to the other birds on the theory of love only, whereas in Shah Abd al-Latif's work the verses relating to love are the expressions of the emotions of love of the heroines themselves. One is the actual experience of love, the other is abstract expression about love. One is meant for others, i.e. the hoopoe tells the birds what love is, whereas the other is the experiences of the heroines themselves.

Suhni is deeply in love with Mehar and is too impatient to wait and think out a safer way to reach her beloved. While commenting directly upon the state of Suhni in love, our poet's implied meaning relates to the condition of a true spiritual seeker.

سِيَارِي سِه رَاتِ مِ، جَا گِهَرِي وَسَنَدِي مِيءِ،

1. Reference is made to the day of judgement.

2. Gurbukhshani, op. cit., p.317.

هَلُو تَهْ پُچُون سُهْنِي، جَا كَرِ جَاڻِي نِيَه،
جَه كِي راتو ڏِيه، مِيهَارُ ئِي مَن مِ.

During the midst of the winter night,
when it is raining, she enters it (river).
Let us go and ask Suhni who knows about love,
Who is thinking of Mehar day and night.¹

The hoopoe describes the signs of a lover who is always melancholy, distressed and agitated, sighing and struggling like a fish out of water. It also tells the birds some anecdotes in connection to the *maqam*. It emphasises that a true lover will be ever ready to sacrifice everything and even life and that he would wish to have thousands of hearts to sacrifice one every minute.²

In one anecdote, Attar describes the state of a true lover who has sold everything to buy wine from the wine-seller whom he loves. When people ask him what love is, he says that love is of such a nature that one would sell the goods of a hundred worlds to buy the wine but that only those who have experienced the feeling of love can understand.³

Shah Abd al-Latif hints at a similar type of sacrifice. This may have been the reason why he chooses stories where the heroine gives her life for the love.

This idea serves a double purpose in his poetry. In the first place it implies that any kind of true love demands selflessness and devotion to the beloved and he shows through his poetry that his heroines do possess the characteristics which are required for love. Moreover, from the Sufi point of view the prerequisite for love is self-sacrifice and self-renunciation. These qualities are displayed by the heroines of Shah Abd al-Latif.

1. Gurbukhshani, op. cit., p.262.

2. Attar, op. cit., p.187.

3. Ibid., pp.187-8.

نکو سَندو سُوَرِ جو، نکو سَندو سِکِ،
 عددُ ناهِ عِشَقِ، پُجائی پانِ لَہی.

There is no end to the sorrows
 nor any limit to the quest
 The love is fathomless,
 it (i.e. love) knows its own depth.¹

Our poet believes that love is an inexhaustible treasure, the depth of which it is beyond the power of a person to measure. Thus the seeker who enters the valley of love, is overpowered by divine love, and becomes impatient to attain divine union.

The third *maqam*: the valley of ma'rifa (knowledge)

According to Attar *ma'rifa* is the third valley or *maqam* which the seeker enters after love. The hoopoe describes its vastness to the birds, saying that it has no beginning nor end. The lover should possess enormous strength and endurance to cope with this immeasurable distance. As all birds do not fly alike, so they attain results according to their ability. In a similar way individuals vary in their capacity for spirituality. Some may reach the '*mihrab*', others may be content with the idol. To a true *salik* who is not pre-occupied with self, but is in search of the divine friend, such secrets are revealed, but anyone who is negligent, should not expect better results.²

The hoopoe encourages the birds to get up and search for the friend and even rebukes them for their negligence, saying:

1. Gurbukhshani, op. cit., p.278.

2. Attar, op. cit., pp.194–195.

How long will you stay as you are, like a donkey
without a halter.¹

For the attainment of divine knowledge there are certain conditions for the *salik*. He has to overcome his faults and weaknesses and give up sleep. Then only can he attain knowledge, which is like a lamp, which can illuminate a gloomy place and guide the *salik*.²

As mentioned earlier, the hoopoe discusses this *maqam* in a long theoretical discourse which he then illustrates with anecdotes. On the other hand, *ma'rifa* (knowledge) in the *Risalo* would appear to be the fifth *maqam*, which comes after detachment and bewilderment.

Shah Abd al-Latif makes Sasui speak about the ways of attaining the *maqam* of knowledge. She blames herself for faults like negligence and sleep. She says that it is because of her lack of knowledge and other weaknesses that she has lost her husband. The following verse expresses her feelings.

تون ڪا ڪاني پاءِ وَڙين ۾ وصال جي،
دوينائي دور ڪري معرفت ملهائ
سُپيريان جي سُونهن ۾ رخنو ڪونه رهائ
اک آشهد چاءِ ته مسلمانِي ماڻئين.

You should wear that collyrium in your eyes which
will bring you *wisal* (i.e. unite you with God).

By giving up double-seeing (*shirk*) cheerfully attain *Ma'rifa*.
You should not have any uncertainty regarding the beauty of

1. Nott, op. cit., p.108.
Cf. Attar, op. cit., p.195.

2. Attar, op. cit., p.196.

the beloved.

When you 'say one', pronounce the *Shahada* that there is no god but the God! Then only can you become a true Muslim.¹

The fourth *maqam*: the valley of detachment

In *Mantiq al-Tair* this is the fourth Sufi *maqam* and the hoopoe is seen explaining its conditions to other birds. It tells them that in order to attain this *maqam* they should give up worldly desires and the pursuit of the useless things of the outer world and should seek the essential things of the inner world.² The hoopoe informs them that this valley is the discovery of their own resources. It is the valley of lightening and power, which will burn everything else, including their external world. When they enter the valley they should give up uncertainty, heedlessness and apathy by renouncing inner attachments, then they will reach a certain stage of development, after which they will become self-sufficient, which will lead them to a higher level of spirituality.³

In the work of Shah Abd al-Latif this seems to be the third valley or *maqam*. For Sasui and Suhni it is not a matter of knowing or learning from someone else, but of personal experience. When they set out in search of their respective beloveds, they have to give up every possession and detach themselves from homes, families and friends. Sasui and Suhni have to proceed on their own without stopping, as they are conscious of the vastness and hardships of the journey.

The poet advises Sasui on how to detach herself from human weakness and worldly desires.

1. Advani, op. cit., p.289.

1. Attar, op. cit., p.200.

Nott, op. cit., pp.110–11.

3. Attar, op. cit., pp.200–202.

Through these heroines Shah Abd al-Latif points out that one can only penetrate the secrets of the spiritual path, by detachment. When the seeker is able to do so, he becomes self-sufficient and able to advance to a higher level. He can thus attain Unity.

The fifth mamqam: the valley of unity

This is the fifth valley in *Mantiq al-Tair*. Here again the hoopoe offers guidance to the other birds about this valley. It tells them that what appears to be multiplicity is in reality Unity. In fact, unity is not different from multiplicity. The variety of colours, shapes and forms and numbers have no existence of their own, this "multiplicity is just appearance, whereas only unity exists. I and you have no significance, but they are both one and the same thing. Only a squint-eyed person sees duality when there is only one Being.¹ The traveller who reaches this valley, loses every feeling of sadness or joy. I and you and duality are all lost or merged in unity. Thus existence and non-existence are one and the same Being.

In the work of Shah Abd al-Latif, this appears to be the sixth valley which Sasui and Suhni reach during their journey, before annihilation. Here again Sasui and Suhni learn the characteristics of this *maqam* not by didactic discourses but by personal experience. While searching for Punhu and Mehar they realise the unity within themselves, discovering that what they seek is no other than themselves. Shah Abd al-Latif's poetry seems to suggest that although a basic unity already exists in the world, the seeker nevertheless has to attain the realisation of it. This realisation of unity can be achieved only from within.

وهمَ ورسایاس، نات پنھو آئون پاڻ ھئي،
 پاڻ ويجايمُ پاھجو، پئي پريان جي پاس،
 رتي علم نہ راس، ڌارا پسن پري جي.

1. Attar, op. cit., p.206.

Nott, op. cit., pp.114-115.

لا ئي خنجَرُ ”لا“ جو، هي! خچر کي هٿُ،
 سڏن جيون، سڏ چي، وٽون سڀ وڪڻُ،
 پيرُ پروڙي کڻُ، ته هلڻ ۾ هوري وهين.

Kill your mule (baser soul) with the dagger of
 ‘La’¹

Detach yourself from everything that causes you
 to be tempted by desires, says Sayyid
 Step forward, with great care, then it will be
 easy for you to proceed.

Or again he says:²

هورنِ هاڙو لنگهڻو، مٺي! مُوسَٽُ ڇڏُ،
 ”لا“ سين اُٿي لڏُ، ”ڪين“ رسائي ڪيچ کي.

O unlucky one! give up self-adornment, and cross
 the Haro.³

Take ‘La’ لا with you, and ‘La’ لا will help you
 to reach the ‘Kech’.⁵

1. I.e. (No—or None other than God.)
2. Gurbukhshani, op. cit., p.311.
3. The name of a mountain.
4. Gurbukhshani, op. cit., p.311.
5. The name of a town in Baluchistan, which was the hometown of Punhu, Sasui's husband.

I was mislead by my doubt (i.e. due to ego)
 otherwise I was Punhu (beloved) myself.
 By being with my beloved, I gave up my ego.
 Without understanding the beloved, knowledge is
 of no value.¹

In the above verse Sasui is blaming herself, saying that it was her own ego which stood as a barrier between her and the beloved, who was not far from her.

As Sasui symbolises the seeker, our poet is critical of the seekers who are mislead by their own misconceptions, and do not try to see within. This internal perception is possible only if the seeker has purified himself and seeks within:

پہی جان پاں میں کیم رُوحِ رہاں،
 تہ نکو ڈنگر ڈیہ میں نکا کیچین کاں،
 پنھون تیس پاں، سسئی، تان سور ہئا۔

When I merged within myself and conversed with
 my soul.

There remained no mountain, nor any need of the
 Kechi.²

As long as I was Sasui I suffered,
 thus I became Punhu myself.³

In the above verse Sasui discovers that what she has been seeking far off is nowhere but within herself. A seeker has to search within to attain the divine beloved.

1. Gurbukhshani, op. cit., p.293.

2. People of Kech, reference is made to Sasui's in-laws.

3. Gurbukhshani, op. cit., p.292.

In *Mantiq al-Tair* Attar says that as long as the seeker is conscious of his separate existence, he will be faced with the problem of good and evil. His lower soul will trouble him with pride, ego and self-love which are the enemies of the seeker and will lead him away from the right path.¹

Shah Abd al-Latif comments on the theme in the following words:

پاڻُ پڙدو پاڻُ کي، سُئي ڪر سَنِيَالُ،
وِڃان جو وِصالُ، سو تان هُئڻُ هِنَ جو.

Listen and take care, for your ego is the veil
The barrier to *wisal* (i.e. the meeting between God
and man) is one's own self or ego.²

Shah Abd al-Latif believes that God is not far away. The seeker has only to overcome his weakness and purify his heart to find God within himself.

سو ئي کڻيو ساڻ، سو ئي ڏورين، سَسُئي!
ڪڏهن ڪنهن نه ڪئو، ڄلڻ متڇهان ڇاڻُ،
پيچ پريان ڪر پاڻ، ته تون تڏائين لَهين.

Sasui! you are searching for the same (person)
whom you are carrying with yourself.

1. Attar, op. cit., p.206.

2. Advani, op. cit., p.356.

None attained realisation by wandering.
Ask yourself about the beloved
and you will find him.

Once the seeker attains self-realisation he learns that there is only one unity, that of God and the seeker himself, and neither is distinct from that unity. In that state the seeker proclaims:

”مُون“ مَوْنِهين ۾ سَڀجي، مُون کي ”مُون“ جُڳاءَ
مَوْنِهين جي ساڃاءَ مَوْنِهين مَنجھان ”مُون“ ٿئي،
اُنھين اِنن جُڳاءَ آڻ کي اِنن نہ چوڻو.

The real 'Self' is situated within me,
Therefore I can say I²
Therefore I have the right to say I.
That I is entitled to claim Unity.
You (i.e. common people) must not say that.³

The sixth *maqam*: the valley of
bewilderment or astonishment.

According to Attar, bewilderment is the sixth *maqam* and he mentions two types of bewilderment. The first type occurs when the seeker is confronted with sorrows. He finds himself sighing and lamenting, and does not know the reason for it, nor can he find a way out of such a situation. It is then that he becomes confused and bewildered.⁴

1. Advani, op. cit., p.355.

2. I.e. self-realisation leads to the realisation of God.

3. Advani, op. cit., p.357.

4. Attar, op. cit., p.212.

The seeker finds himself completely lost and it is beyond his reason to understand his own feelings. Belief and unbelief have no longer any importance to him.

As for the second type of bewilderment, it is caused by awe. The seeker is perplexed at the sight of unusual things to which he finds no logical answer. In this context, Attar tells the story of a slave who while asleep is taken to the palace of a king, where he is surrounded by beautiful girls. The princess who admires his beauty spends the night entertaining him, and then before dawn he is made drunk and brought back home. In the morning when he wakes up, he cannot understand what has happened to him during the night. He is full of amazement and wonders if what has happened is a dream or reality.¹

When the birds reach this valley they lose their senses. They are bewildered and are no longer conscious of their actions and feelings. In this valley they are overtaken by innumerable sorrows, because of separation from the beloved.

In the work of Shah Abd al-Latif, bewilderment seems to be the fourth *maqam* on the Sufi path. After detaching themselves from their family and friends, Sasui and Suhni find themselves all alone without any companion or support. Shah Abd al-Latif comments on this stage of bewilderment in the following lines:

لوچان ٿي لآحد ۾ هاڏي لھان نہ حد،
 سپريان جي سونھن جو، نڪو قد نہ مد،
 ھت سڪڻ بي عتد، ھت پرين پرو ناھ ڪو.

I am searching in infinity
 But I cannot find the limits of my guide²

1. Attar, op. cit., pp.216–217.

2. Here the guide is the beloved or God.

The beauty of the beloved is beyond length and
breadth
Here yearning is beyond measure,
But there the beloved does not care about it.¹

In the above verse the poet is referring to the dependence of the seeker on God, on the one hand, and His Being to be beyond any limitations on the other hand.

In another verse the helplessness of the seeker is again expressed by the poet.

حوصلو جَيرَت ۾، ڪَري ڪَينَ دَرَڪُ،
جو حُسنَ سَندو حقُ، سو ڪورُ پروڙي ڪَينَ ڪَئي.

The strength of bewilderment is not known to
intellect

The beauty of the Divine Truth* cannot be understood by the
blind.²

Sasui has to pass through deserts and mountains. She finds herself bewildered both by her unfamiliar and vast surroundings and by the sorrows of separation from her beloved. Nevertheless she does not seem to give up hope of seeing her beloved. She exclaims:

آڌ تَرجا، آهڙا، ڏنگَرُ ڪي ڏاڪا،
ڪَير آهَ عَجيبَ ڪي، سِڪَ منجها سا ڪا،
پيئي هٽيڪي هَوَ ڪي، ڪوڪَ وِجي ڪَن ڪا،
مَنهنجو وَسُ واڪا، ٻُڌڻُ ڪَرُ پروڇَ جو.

1. Advani, op. cit., p.345.

2. Ibid., p.351.

* God- حقُ

The mountain has crooked and difficult steps
 I am sighing out of longing for my amazing
 beloved
 May my beloved hear my call.
 Calling out is under my control,
 but it is left to the Baloch to hear my call.¹

، -

Shah Abd al-Latif gives a powerful illustration of bewilderment in the story of Suhni. When her unbaked jar begins to disintegrate in the middle of the river and she is surrounded by dangerous creatures in the water, she is bewildered at the sudden shock. In spite of this she is hopeful and is seen struggling to fulfil her promise with Mehar.

گورا ٻئي پار، هيون حيرت ۾ پئو،
 وهان ته ويرم ٿي، نيءَ مَر پوءِ نهار،
 وڃان ته واڪو ٿي، پاڙي پوءِ پڇار،
 هٿ ٿي وعدي وار، هٿ سونڊون ڏينم سر تيون.

Both sides being fateful, my heart is in a state
 of bewilderment
 If I stay back, I will be liable to accusation
 by love
 If I decide to go, then that will be echoed and
 will give the neighbours a chance to gossip
 On the one hand it will be a breach of promise
 and on the other hand my friends will torment
 me with their taunting.²

1. Gurbukhshani, op. cit., p.335.

2. Gurbukhshani, op. cit., p.269.

In another verse the poet expresses his amazement at the courage of Suhni.

دهشت دُر درياه مې، جَت جايون جانارن،
 نكو سڼدو سِير جو، مې نه مَلّاحن،
 دَرندا درياه مې واكا كړو ورن،
 سچا پيړا بار مې هلئا هيټ وچن،
 پرزو پيدا نه ټيبي، تختو منجها تن،
 كو جو قهر كُنن مې وټا كين ورن،
 اُتي اَن تارن، ساهرا! سِير لنگهء تون.

There is havoc in the river, the home of the water
 creatures

None knows the limit of it (water) even the
 sailors do not know the extent of it.

The blood-thirsty creatures of the river hurl and
 charge about.

The very ships sink right into the deep waters.

Not a strip (of ship) is visible

Not a plank has come to the surface

The tyranny of the whirlpool is such that whoever
 enters, one never re-emerges.

O Sahar! help the non-swimmer to cross the deep
 water.¹

The seventh *maqam*: the valley of annihilation

In *Mantiq al-Tair* the hoopoe continues its discourse by speaking of the valley of annihilation. This is the seventh and final *maqam*, according to Attar. For Shah Abd al-Latif this is also the final stage on the Sufi path. Both poets seem to have similar views on this *maqam*. The hoopoe tells the other birds that when the seeker reaches this stage, he has to give up his ego or 'greedy

1. Gurbukhshani, op. cit., p.260.

self', for then only can they achieve their goal.¹

The essence of this valley is forgetfulness, dumbness, deafness and distraction, the thousand shadows which surrounded you disappear in a single ray of the celestial sun. When the ocean of immensity begins to heave, the pattern on its surface loses its form, and this pattern is no other than the world present and the world to come.²

In the work of Shah Abd al-Latif one finds the same idea expressed. The poet reminds his heroines that in order to meet their beloved they must annihilate their smaller self to attain union with the whole:

مَري، جِيءَ تہ ماڻھين، جَانِبَ جو جمالُ،
تئين ھندَ حلالُ، جِي پندِ اِها ئي پارين.

Die first, then live, then you will attain the
beauty of the Beloved.

When you follow that advice, then only will you
be accepted.³

After the seeker gets rid of his baser self and loses consciousness of the material world, all illusions disappear. Losing one's identity is like a drop of water which becomes part of the whole ocean. The hoopoe describes the characteristics of this valley to the other birds in the following words:

The seeker by renouncing his identity and his
apparent annihilation has attained immortality
in God.

1. Attar, op. cit., pp.219-220.

2. Nott, op. cit., p.123.

3. Gurbukhshani; op. cit., p.314.

Shah Abd al-Latif also speaks of a similar unity, which is attained by the seeker after annihilating one's base desires and one's ego. When he is able to do so all differences disappear, just as the waves merge to form part of the ocean:—

لَهْرِي لَكَ لِبَاسَ، پاڻي پَسُ هِيڪَڙو،
 اُونهي تِه عميقَ جي، واري چڏو ماسَ،
 جَتِ ناهِ نهايتَ نيءَ جي، ڪو آتِ پنهي ڪاسَ،
 تَرَنَ جي تَلاسَ، لاهِ تِه لالَن لَکِ تيينَ.

The waves appear in numerous forms or attires,
 On perceiving water, it is just the same
 Never think about the depth of the ocean.
 Where there is no limit to love,
 annihilate all your desires
 When you stop searching for the place of safety
 Then only can you meet your beloved.¹

After travelling through dangerous forests and crossing rugged mountains, Sasui attains self-realisation. She discovers that the veil which has separated her from her beloved is in fact her own ego and attachment to the material world. When she succeeds in detaching herself from such things she finds Punhu within herself.

سو ئي ڪٿو ساڻ، سو ئي ڏورين، سَسُئي!
 ڪڏه ڪنن نه ڪٿو، ڄُلن منجها ڄاڻ،
 پُڄ پريان ڪَر پاڻ، تِه تون تڙائين لهن.

Sasui, you are searching for the same (person)
 whom you are carrying with yourself.
 None attained realisation by wandering.

1. Gurbukhshani, op. cit., p.278.

Ask yourself about the beloved and you will find him.¹

Similarly, Suhni searches and longs to meet her Mehar. Our poet gives her advice about how she can attain her beloved.

پاڻُ مَر کُئِجِ پاڻَ سِين، وَسِيلا وَسارِ،
لُرُ لَنگَهائي، سُهڻِي! پَرَتِ وَجَهَندي پَارِ
سِي تُرَتِ لَنگَهنديُون تارِ، اُڪَندي اَڳَه جَن سِين.

Never take your ego with you, give up every kind of protection or shelter.

O Suhni! your true love will help you reach the other side of the deep waters.

Only those will cross (i.e. the deep sea), who hold steadfast love as their guide.²

Our poet comments further:

گَهڙو پِگُو، مُنَدَّ مَئي، وَسِيلا وَئا،
نَهان پوءِ سَئا، سُهڻِي سَنَدَ مِهَارَ جا.

The vessel broke, and the woman died,
and the protective methods were destroyed.

Then only Suhni heard the call of Mehar
(i.e. attained union).³

It is important to note that there is a significant difference between Attar and Shah Abd al-Latif in this *maqam*. Whereas the birds reach their desired goal in their life-time, the heroines attain union with their beloved only after death.

1. Gurbukhshani, op.cit., p.288.

2. Ibid., p.257.

3. Gurbukhshani, op. cit., p.257.

JALAL AL-DIN RUMI AND SHAH ABD AL-LATIF

SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES IN THEIR POETIC IMAGERY

Jalal al-Din Rumi (1207–1273 A.D.) hardly needs any introduction. Because of the alarming political conditions in Balkh, Rumi's father Baha al-Din fled with his family in 1219 A.D., visiting several Islamic countries and finally settling in central Anatolia (Rum). Baha' al-Din was invited to Konya by the Saljuq ruler and given the honour of a place to preach and teach there. Rumi inherited his father's interest in Sufism associating, like him, with leading Sufis of the time. After his father's death, Rumi took up his father's religious office, teaching and preaching from 1231 to 1244 A.D. in Konya and wearing the traditional turban and gown of orthodox religious scholars. Later, he became a prominent Sufi and a spiritual leader in his own right.²

In 1244 Rumi met a wandering dervish, Shams al-Din of Tabriz, whom he perceived as the perfect image of the Divine Beloved and spiritual guide. After the mysterious disappearance of Shams al-Din, Rumi directed his affection first to a goldsmith named Salah al-Din Zarkub and, after the latter's death in 1258 A.D., to Husam al-Din Hassan (Chalabi). It was on the latter's advice that Rumi composed his famous *Masnawi* in six volumes,

1. Arberry, A.J., *Discourses of Rumi*, London, 1961, pp.3–4.
Cf. also Nicholson, R.A., *Translation of Eastern Poetry and Prose*, Cambridge, 1922, p.125.
2. Arberry, op. cit., pp.3–4.
Cf. also Schimmel, A.M., *Mystical Dimensions of Islam*, Chapel Hill, 1975, pp.311–12.

the contents of which he addresses to Husam al-Din who wrote down what was said.¹ The first work of Rumi was of course the *Divan-i Shams*, a voluminous collection of lyrical poems.

After this brief sketch of Rumi's life, we may now turn our attention to the relationship between Rumi and Shah Abd al-Latif. The latter was a declared admirer of Rumi, acknowledging his indebtedness to him in his verses and referring to him directly on a number of occasions. For example, Shah Abd al-Latif says:

طَالِبُ كَثَرِ سُنَّةِ سِرِّ إِي رُومِي جِي رِهَانِ،
پَهَرِينِ وِجَائِي پَانِ، پَسَنُ پُو ۽ پَرِينِ كِي.

The seekers are many. Divine Beauty is the origin
(of everything),
This is the pleasant conversation of Rumi
First of all lose yourself, then seek the beloved.²

He goes on to say:-

طَالِبُ كَثَرِ سُنَّةِ سِرِّ رُومِي چُو آهي،
تَاڙِي جِي لاهي، تہ منجھم مُشاہدو ٿي.

The seekers are many, (Divine) Beauty is the
origin (of everything)
Rumi has said so.
Remove the veil, then perception will be within.³

There are altogether six such couples in the *Risalo* where our poet refers directly to Rumi. There are also a small number

1. Arberry, op. cit., p.6.

2. Shahvani, op. cit., p.125.

3. Shahvani, op. cit., p.125.

4. Ibid., pp.124-125.

of verses which seem to show the direct influence of Rumi, as for example in the case of the image of the reed used in the following verses:

جنء کا کانی کانہ، لُسندی لاتیون کری،
 آچی پئی اوچتی، دردِ پریان جی دانہ،
 ویچ! دنیین کُہ پانہ؟ سورہین کی سامہان.

Like a segment of reed, it tells the tale of its
 being cleft.

It cries because of the flickering pain of the
 beloved.

Physician! why do you cauterise my arm
 when the pain lies in my heart?¹

It must be admitted that the idea of the reed and other images used by Rumi are not new. For example, as Schimmel points out, the reed image is found in the *Hadiqa* of Sana'i which originally came from a Greek source, i.e. the tale of King Midas.² What seems highly probable, however, is that Shah Abd al-Latif came to know these images from his knowledge of the work of Rumi.

In this chapter we shall make a detailed comparison between the imagery used in the poetry of Rumi and that found in the *Risalo* of Shah Abd al-Latif. As far as Rumi's imagery is concerned, Schimmel has already devoted a major part of one of her principal works to that topic. We will therefore rely on Schimmel for an analysis of Rumi's imagery³ and pay more detailed attention to that of Shah Abd al-Latif.

1. Shahvani, op. cit., pp.1079-80.

2. Schimmel, A.M., *The triumphal Sun: A study of the works of Jalal al-Din Rumi*, London and the Hague, 1980, p.37.

3. Ibid., pp.59-210.

THE SUN

The image of the sun is universal, although each writer uses it in his own way. Rumi, however, pays special attention to the concept of the sun. He uses the image primarily as it is used in the Qur'an as possessing the Divine attributes of glory and majesty and having great miraculous powers.¹

In Rumi's poetry the sun represents perfection and hence is a symbol of God, who is loving and compassionate to man and the whole universe. Rumi is full of admiration for the sun and its powers, whether constructive or destructive. In his work the destructive aspect of the sun is intended for the benefit of mankind, for God is the knower of secrets.²

For Shah Abd al-Latif, the sun has two distinct sides, one positive and the other negative. The positive aspect includes its radiant beauty which is evident to everyone. In *Sur Mumal Rano*, the beauty of a Kapari is compared to that of the morning sun, which is red like blood or a ruby:

سُجُ سِيَاڻِي جا ڪَري، سامِي سائي رُو،
اچي ٿي عَطرَ جي، مَنجها مُگتَ بُو،
سا ڏيکارِيهُون بُو ۽ جِڻان لاهوٽِي لعل ٿيو.

The colour of the *swami's* face is red like
the early morning sun.

The sweet fragrance of perfume comes from
his crown

Show us the place from where the Lahuti has become
red: ³

1. Schimmel, op.cit., p.61.

2. ibid., pp.61-62.

3. Shahvani, op.cit., p.707.

In the same *sur*, the *swami's* beauty and radiance are compared to that of the sun:

سُجُ سُيَاڻِي جا ڪَري، سَامِي سَائِي وَڻڪَ،
 سَهِي نَه سَگهان ساڻ سِن، تَه جي راسِن جي رَوَنقَ،
 ڪِه رَتاين لاکَ مَر؟ ڪِه ڏنائين پَانَن پَڪَ!
 سَندي سوڍل سِڪَ، ڪَپر ڪورُون جَهليُون.

The colour of the Swami is like tomorrow's morning sun.

I cannot bear the radiance of the sun for a second
 Did he colour his face with *lakh*¹ or paint it
 with *pan*?²

The love of Sodha³ stands full to the brim.⁴

In the above verse, the *Swami's* radiance is so great that one cannot bear it. The implied answer to the question as to how he made his face red is that it is all thanks to the light of love.

Rumi also speaks of the radiant light of the sun, which has the capacity to purify stone by its heat and to transform this insignificant substance into a precious ruby. The sun treats the stone harshly, but the poet justifies this action which, in his view, is for the benefit of the stone.⁵

Shah Abd al-Latif is not as fond of the sun as is Rumi. In a couple of verses, as seen above, he does speak of the beauty and radiance of the *Swami* in terms of the sun, an analogy which

1. A kind of red colour, which does not fade away.
2. A betel leaf, which is stuffed with spices and eaten after food, it makes the mouth red.
3. I.e. Mumal, whose castewas Sodha.
4. Shahvani, op. cit., p.708.
5. Schimmel, op. cit., p.70.

also has its spiritual implications, but such verses are not as frequent as in Rumi's work.

For Rumi the sun represents diverse things. On the one hand, it stands for God and also for the Prophet Muhammad, who is the source of light and blessing in this world. On the other hand, in his imagistic system, the sun of course stands for Shams al-Din of Tabriz, who in Rumi's estimation represents the Perfect Man. Rumi sees the Divine Light and Beauty and the glory of the Prophet as being combined in his beloved Shams al-Din. After the latter's death, Rumi sees a reflection of (Ziya) the same light in Salah al-Din and later in Husam al-Din.¹

In the case of Shah Abd al-Latif the sun does not symbolise the Perfect Man or the Prophet. Moreover, in various *surs* about Sasui such as *Abri*, *Husaini* and *Ma'zuri*, the sun is depicted as unsympathetic and heartless, having no compassion for the already dejected Sasui. For example, while Sasui is forced to travel through the rugged mountains, the sun heats the mountains and thus burns her feet:

وَدَا وَثَّ وَثْكَارَ جَا، جَتِ جَانُو، جَمُرَ، جَرِ،
 كُوسَا تَهَنِ كَكِرَا، بِي دَمْدَمِ تَبِي دَرِ،
 وَيْچَارِي دِي وَرِ، پِيرُ نَه لَهِي پَرِي جَوِ.

There are the tall trees of Wankar
 and mountains like Ja'o, Jamar and Jar.
 The stones and concrete have become hot, and
 the earth is burning with heat.
 The poor one is wandering, unable to find the
 footprints of her beloved.²

Elsewhere, the poet has Sasui accuse the sun and the other elements of taking her beloved away from her. Thus she considers

1. Schimmel, op. cit., pp.62-63.

2. Shahvani, op. cit., p.388.

them as her enemies:

اُنَ وَيَرِي، اَوْنَارَ وَيَرِي، وَيَرِي تَيْرَمَ دِير،
 چوئُون وَيَرِي واڻ ٿيو، جِه لَتْنَا پَنهوءَ پير،
 پَنجُون وَيَرِي سَجُ ٿيو، جِه اُلهي ڪي اوير،
 چَهوَن وَيَرِي چَهَر ٿيو، جِه سَوَان نہ ڪئا سير،
 سَتُون وَيَرِي چَنڊ ٿيو، جو ڪَڙو نہ وڏي وير،
 واهيري جي وير، چُلُون ڪريان چَهَرين!

The camels are my enemies, so are the camel-men,
 my brothers-in-law are also my enemies.

The wind which has blown away the footprints of
 Punhu has become my fourth enemy.

The sun which by setting delayed me has become
 my fifth enemy.

My sixth enemy is the mountains, which have not
 kept their path straight

The moon which has not risen early is the seventh
 enemy

When the birds settle down
 I rush through the mountain.¹

Shah Abd al-Latif does not like these elements which display
 qualities of brute force and hardness because they cause miseries
 to the weak.

Shah Abd al-Latif prefers the light of the moon to that of the
 sun, considering it soothing and full of comfort. The poet depicts
 the moon as the go-between for lovers to whom they disclose
 their secrets and from whose company they derive comfort:

ناسيندي نهار، پهرين ڪج پرين ڏي،

1. Shahvani, op. cit., p.505.

آئون جي ڏينهن سنڀا چئج ڇنڊ! اپار
 ساڃن! سڀ ڄمار، اڪيون اوهان جي آسري.

As you arise, first of all you must look at
 my beloved.

Give him the numerous love messages that I am
 going to give you.

O moon! tell him, 'sweetheart! all my life
 my eyes will be waiting for you.'

It should be said that the full moon in rural areas where there was (and is) no electricity, has great importance because it brings cheerfulness. It illuminates the whole environment with its cool soothing light cast over the trees, rivers and everywhere. It is common practice for weddings to be arranged on the fourteenth day of the moon's cycle, and for lovers to meet at the full moon. In other words the moon has great romantic significance in everyday life. Shah Abd al-Latif has a lover express his views on the moon in the following lines:

اڄ پڻ اچائي، چوڏهي ماه ڇنڊ جي،
 مون گهر مون پرين جي، اچڻ جي وائي،
 مون گهر واڌائي، پيئي ڪام ڪرن ۾.

Tonight it is bright, because it is the fourteenth
 day of the moon

My beloved is due to come to my house

In my house there is jubilation, but the envious
 ones are embittered.²

To sum up, Rumi expresses great admiration for the sun, attributing to it double implication; it is the source of nourishment, for humans as well as trees and grass, an attribute which it shares

1. Shahvani op. cit., pp.170-1.

2. Shahvani, op. cit., pp.161-2.

with God. Similarly it is the radiance of Shams al-Din which is the source of his inspiration and happiness. Just as, without the light of the sun nothing can survive in the darkness, so, without Shams al-Din for Rumi there will be only spiritual darkness and death.¹ It is clear that for Rumi the sun is a much more powerful image than it is for Shah Abd al-Latif.

WATER

Jalal al-Din Rumi makes extensive use of the image of water. As Schimmel has shown, the image of water is found in the works of many Muslim poets because of its prominence in the Qur'an. In their poetry water represents the origin of everything, including the very existence of human life. In addition it serves as the source of sustenance for every living creature.

Following the tradition of several of his poetic predecessors, Rumi expresses his views on the Divine Nature or Essence of water. According to Rumi it has numerous functions serving, at times as a blessing and Divine mercy in the form of rain, and at other times bringing the wrath of the Almighty on sinners, causing misery, disaster and death.²

In the work of Shah Abd al-Latif, the image of water appears continuously and seems to have been greatly favoured by him. It occurs extensively in four *surs* of his *Risalo*, namely, *Sur Sarang*, *Srirag*, *Samundhi* and *Suhni*. Although references to water can be found in other *surs*, these are less extensive.

In the above mentioned *surs* water is dealt with on different levels. Unlike Rumi whose thoughts are sequential, Shah Abd al-Latif's style is distinctly non-narrative and non-sequential in comparison with the narrative form of Rumi's poetry.

1. Schimmel, op. cit., p.63.

2. Schimmel, op. cit., pp.75-80.

Most of the meanings which Rumi associates with water are taken from the Qur'an. For example, he says that the function of water is to purify and sanctify sinners. Moreover, water symbolises Divine Mercy or *rahmat* brought about by the Prophet Muhammad and the Saints. But the same water which may be a blessing can also bring destruction to the infidel.¹

When suggesting the religious connotations of water Shah Abd al-Latif follows the same Sufi tradition as Rumi. In this respect the ideas of the two poets correspond.

In the work of Shah Abd al-Latif there are a number of verses which refer to the Prophet Muhammad. For example the poet says:

روضي تان رسول جي، ڪٽو وڃڻين وارو،
پريائون پير پئي، نظر سين نارو،
هادي! پر حڪم سين، هي ٿر تاسيارو،
نرمل نظارو، پي پساو پاھجو.

Flashes of lightening have started from the tomb
of the Prophet.

They have approached flashing and filled the
spout² (with water).

At the command of the guide, because this place
has been thirsty.

The beloved has manifested his sanctified
splendour.³

In the above verse there is a suggestion of the blessing of the prophet Muhammad. It seems that our poet is suggesting

1. Schimmel, op. cit., pp.76–80.

2. The spout for conveying rain–water down from the roof of the house.

3. Shahvani, op. cit., p.960.

that both the rain and the well-being brought about by it, have been brought about at the command of the Prophet. Just as the Prophet of Islam is considered by the Muslims to be the *rahmat al-alam*, so too the rain possesses this quality of bringing prosperity to the whole world. This may be one of the reasons why when he thinks about the rain, Shah Abd al-Latif is reminded of the blessings of the Prophet Muhammad. Schimmel has also pointed out this similarity between the characteristics of the rain and those of the Prophet Muhammad.¹

Rumi speaks of the 'ocean of inner meaning' and the outside world. He calls the sea by different names, such as 'the water of Life' or an 'ocean of Unity', which has immeasurable depth. The outside forms which one sees around are straws. They have no significance and hide the actual sea.²

In *Sur Samundhi* and *Sur Sri Rag*³ Shah Abd al-Latif speaks elaborately on different aspects of the sea. On the one hand, he refers to the amazing vastness and depth of the sea, which conceals within itself numerous secrets and divine attributes. It symbolises the ocean of divine love and knowledge. If a seeker is able to attain even a drop of it, it will suffice for a lifetime. He expresses this idea in the following lines:

سيوا ڪر سمنڊ جي، جت جر وھي ٿو جال،
 سئين وھن سير ۾، ماڻڪ، موتي لال،
 جي ماسو جڙئي مال، ته پوڄارا! پر ٿين.

Worship the sea, where water is flowing in
 abundance
 Hundreds of precious pearls and rubies are flowing
 in its midst.

1. Schimmel, A.M., *Pain and Grace*, Leiden, 1976, p.258.
2. Schimmel, A.M., *The Triumphal Sun*, p.77.
3. Shahvani, op. cit., pp.191-279.

Even if you can get a portion of it,
O worshipper! you will have received your full
share.¹

تاري وان تراز کي، منجها موج، ملاح!
دانهون کن درياه جيون، اونهي جا آگاه،
سونهن جي صلاح، وٽ ته وير لنگهي وڃين.

O sailor! sail your boat away across the waves
The knowledgeable warn against the dangers of
the deep sea.²
Take the advice of the guide, so that you may
cross the tide safely.³

In connection with the same image of the sea being equated with the world, Rumi⁴ and Shah Abd al-Latif, in the tradition of their Sufi predecessors, use the symbol of the pearl and oyster. Both employ it with its Sufi implications, comparing the life of the *salik* to that of the oyster. Although the oyster lives in the sea it does not taste the sea water but only a drop of rain water. Consequently, it is rewarded with a pearl. In similar manner a *salik* who lives in the world but does not become involved in it, is rewarded with Divine Grace. Shah Abd al-Latif expresses his views thus:

سڀ سمندين سڄي، امر آساروس،
هاڙو پي نه پڙي، منو مه لڳوس،
ماڻڪ تي مڙيوس، جنء تنگ ڪڍيائين تار ۾.

1. Ibid., p.200.

2. Shah Abd al-Latif uses the word 'river' in the verse. This he does frequently, not only to fit the rhyme scheme, but he is referring to Indus.

3. Shahvani, op. cit., p.230.

4. Schimmel, op. cit., p.79.

The oyster is born and lives in the sea,
 But has hopes on in the clouds.
 It does not drink the salty water, nor does
 it touch fresh water
 It receives a pearl because it remains thirsty
 within the deep waters.¹

Shah Abd al-Latif who lived in a rural area saw the distress, which lack of water caused to every living creature. Rain was desperately needed by everyone in a pastoral and agricultural society. The very existence and well-being of all organisms depend on water. The following verse reveals this:-

سارنگ کي سارين، ماڙهو مرگ، ميهيون،
 آريون ابر آسري، تارا توارين،
 سپون جي سمونڊ ۾ نئي سڄ ٺهارين،
 پلر پيارين، ته سنگهارن سک ٿيي.

Human beings, deer and buffaloes all long for the
 rain.

The wild ducks hope for the cloud,
 Whilst the cuckoo is also crying.
 The oysters in the sea wait every morning for it.
 Let the countrymen drink the rain water and
 become content.²

Such a scene must have moved the poet who pleads and
 prays for rain on their behalf:

سارنگ! سار لهيج، الله لڳ اڃين جي،
 پاڻي پوڄ پتن ۾ ارزان ان ڪريج،
 وطن وسائيج، ته سنگهارن سک ٿيي.

1. Shahvani, op. cit., p.830.

2. Shahvani, op. cit., p.965.

O rain! in the name of God, look after the thirsty
ones

Let there be plenty of water on the ground,
to make the grain cheap.

Let the country flourish, and
the countrymen become prosperous.¹

In the same *sur* the poet goes on to give a contrasting description in which the places and creatures are the same but the rain has brought cheerfulness, and rejoicing:

مُنْدَ تِي مَنْدَلِ مَنْدِلَا، سِي اوهيَرَن اوكِ،
چاچِرِ تِي چَنِنِ مِ ميهُونِ چَرِنِ موڪِ،
سَرِهِيُونِ تِيُونِ سَنگَهاريُونِ، پويو پائِنِ طوقِ،
ميها، چِيپَرِ قُنْگِيُونِ، جِتِ تَيْنِ سَيِ تِي توكِ،
لاهيِنِ مَتانِ لوڪِ، دُولَهي جا دِيهَرَا.

It is the season (of rain) the feasts are arranged,
and the clouds of rain have sent showers.

The foam has drained into the lower spots of
grassy-land, and the buffaloes are cropping
plenty

The countrywomen are happy and making garlands
of flowers.

Gourds of different types, cucumbers and mushrooms
are all in abundance.

The days of suffering are over.²

Our poet portrays a picture of the countryside after the rain,
and its resultant wellbeing:—

بَرِ وَنَا، تَرِ وَنَا، وَنِيُونِ تَراريُونِ،
پَرِهَ جو پَتَنِ تِي، كَنِ وَلوڑا وايُونِ،

1. Ibid., pp.964–5.

2. Shahvani, op. cit., pp.971–72.

مَكْنُ پَرِينِ هَتَّارَا، سَنگَهَارِيُونِ سايُونِ،
 ساري دُهنِ سامُهيُونِ، بولايُونِ رايُونِ،
 بانهيُونِ ۽ ٻايُونِ، پَكي سُهِنِ پاھجي.

It has rained in the barren plains, in the Thar
 desert and even in the valleys.

At the break of day one hears the sound of
 churning.

The nomadic women are content having their
 hands full of butter.

They are busy milking different types of buffaloes.

The maid-servants and the ladies of the house
 are in high spirits in their thatched cottages.¹

This is the positive aspect of water in the poetry of Shah Abd al-Latif. The poet also, however, presents its destructive aspect. Rumi gives examples from religious sources, where the water of the Nile which was a boon for the Israelites proved destructive, bringing wrath, poison and death for the infidel Egyptians.² In contrast, the examples given by Shah Abd al-Latif are not from religious sources, but from folk stories.

In *Sur Suhni* our poet describes the turbulence of the river and the destruction it causes:

دَهشتِ دَمَرِ دَرِيَا ۾، جِتِ جايُونِ جانارنِ،
 نڪو سَنَدُو سِيرَ جو، مَٻُ نہ مَلاحنِ،
 دَرِندا دَرِيَا ۾، واڪا ڪِئو وَرَنِ،
 سَڄا پيڙا ٻارِ ۾، ٻِلَٽا هيٺِ وَجَنِ،
 پُرزو پَنڊا نہ ٿئي، تَخَتو مَنجها تَنِ،
 ڪو جو قَهَرُ ڪُننِ ۾، وِٽا ڪِينَ وَرَنِ،
 اُتي اُٿارَنِ، ساھَرَا سِيرَ لَنگھا تُونِ.

1. Shahvani, op. cit., pp.963-4.

2. Schimmel, op. cit., p.76.

There is havoc in the river, the home of the water
creatures

None knows the limit of it (water) even the
sailors do not know the extent of it.

The blood-thirsty creatures of the river hurl and
charge about.

The very ships sink right into the deep waters.

Not a strip (of ship) is visible

Not a plank has come to the surface

The tyranny of the whirlpool is such that whoever
enters, one never re-emerges.

O Sahar! help the non-swimmer to cross the deep water.¹

Apart from the above-mentioned images of water, Shah Abd al-Latif like Rumi makes other references to less obvious forms of water; in particular, the water of the eyes or tears. Sometimes he has the lover challenge the rain saying that if it had learned from the lover, it would never have stopped raining (shedding tears).

وَسَنُ أَكْرَيْنَ جَنِّ جِي هُنْدَ سَكِينِ مِيَه،
تَه هُونْدَ رَاتُونِ ذِيَه، بَسِ يُونْدَنِئُونِ نَه كَرِين.

If you had learnt raining (shedding tears) from
the eyes, O, rain,
Then you would not have stopped drizzling day
and night.²

Elsewhere he says:

اَكِنِ كِي آهِنِ، وَذَا وَجْهَ وَرْهَنِ جَا،
مَنْبِي بِيئُونِ مَامَرِ جَهِيَرُونِ لَاهِنِ،
جَنِّ سِي كَرِ اُپِ مِ، اَكْمِيُونِ آهِنِ،
جَهْرُ قَرْنِ لَاهِنِ، وَسَنِ سَانُونِ مِيَه جَانِ.

1. Shahvani, op. cit., p.299.

2. Shahvani, op. cit., p.961.

The eyes have several ways of fighting,
 They pick a quarrel and will not give up;
 Like the clouds in the sky, they have loaded
 themselves (with tears),
 They never stop drizzling, and pour down like
 seasonal rain.¹

ANIMALS AND BIRDS

Jalal al-Din Rumi refers to numerous animals and birds in his work. Most of them are concrete examples taken from his everyday experience. Certain of them have some association with Qur'anic or religious themes or have already been used by other Sufis before him in a spiritual context. There are other images of animals and birds which are mythological in character, but are used by the poet to point to some Sufi or moral lesson.²

Shah Abd al-Latif also uses animals and birds but not as many as Rumi. Like Rumi, his imagery is also taken from the birds and animals he sees around him, although a few are from a mythological Islamic source.

Schimmel draws attention to Rumi's treatment of the camel. Although it is an ill-natured animal, nevertheless, with training it can serve man well. Rumi likens the camel to the human body, which may symbolise man's baser aspects and instincts. Because of its bad nature the camel eats thorns, although it may be grazing in the garden of Iram.³

Shah Abd al-Latif also condemns the camel for its bad habits and sinful nature:

1. Shahvani, op. cit., p.999.

2. Schimmel, op. cit., pp.93-95.

3. Schimmel, op. cit., pp.93-4.

آئي ٻُڌم وَڻَ جاءَ مانَ مُڪَرِّيُون چَري،
 ڪُڏا تورو ڪَرو، لَڪِئو لاڻِي ڪاءِ
 اِنَ مَِي سَندي ماءِ مونَ ڳالڙنَ ڳوڙها ڪِئو.

I have fastened the camel to a tree so that it
 should eat the buds.

But the ill-natured camel is secretly eating the
 salty shrubs.

O mother! this camel has caused much distress to
 me.¹

Here the poet may be interpreted as alluding to the animal instinct in human beings, which leads them astray. Schimmel also refers to this image of the camel used by Shah Abd al-Latif as a stubborn camel-soul, which needs training to bring it to the right path.²

On the other hand, our poet treats the camel elsewhere as a good friend and companion to human beings, who is useful in many ways. For example, he says:-

مَيا! تو مَهارَ، سَچي پاڻان سونَ جِي،
 چارينَ چَنڊنَ چوڻيون، نايو ميندي ڌارَ،
 سَندي پي پِچارَ، جِي مونَ راتِ رساڻين.

O camel! I will adorn you with a golden rein
 And feed you on sandalwood, and branches of
henna.

1. Shahvani, op. cit., p.175.

2. Shimmel, *Pain and Grace*, Leiden, 1976, p.178.

Here the camel can be seen as the نفسِ لوامه or even نفسِ مطمعه which has lost its original lowly qualities and is able to carry men to the beloved.

If only you can take me to the place
of my beloved tonight.¹

Our poet even praises the camel in the following lines:-

لَکِ لَاکِیْتُو کَرَهُو، کَوَرِینِ دِیْنِی گَدُوِمِ
اَکِنِ سُوْنَه تَتُوِمِ مُلِ مَهَانِگُو مَرِ چَتُو.

The camel which is worth several thousands
I have bought for millions
It is worthy of my courtyard,
Do no say that it cost me a lot.²

In Rumi's work "the cow or ox symbolises the body or the carnal soul which has to be slaughtered; and those who 'worship fodder' are comparable to the cow and will die like asses".³ Sometimes he uses the sea-cow to symbolise the lower soul – *nafs mara*, which is transformed by Divine grace into the soul at peace, *nafs mutma'inna*. Shah Abd al-Latif, by contrast, uses cows and buffaloes to symbolise the prosperity and happiness for country folk:

مَوْتِي مَانْدَاڄِ جَا، پَرِي كِيائِينِ پَرِ،
وِچُونِ وَسَنِ آئِيُونِ، کَوَدَانِ کِڻِي کَرِ،
مِيهُونِ پاڻِ مُرَادِيُونِ، تَتَا چَرَنِ تَرِ،
وَدِي اوه آئِيُونِ، پُئِي لَآئِي قَرِ،
سَارِي اَچِيو سُوا مِيهُونِ، دِیْنِ کِيرِ سَهَرِ،
سَانِ وَاڻِيْدِنِ وَرِ، پَرِيُونِ پَرِچَنِ جُونِ کِيُونِ.

It has started rainig, and building up edges

1. Shahvani, op.clt.,p.176.

2. Shahvani, op. cit., p.184.

3. Schimmel, A.M., *The Triumphal Sun*, London, 1980, p.96.

Delightedly flashes of lightnings have come
 bringing rain with them.
 The buffaloes graze at leisure in the cool pastures
 with udders full of milk, they have come
 having calves behind them.
 The buffaloes having new born calves, come home
 eagerly to give fresh milk.
 One who is the supporter of the lonely women
 comes to make friends with them.¹

Elsewhere again cows are mentioned with reference to rural life, where people notice the change in the behaviour of cows, because of the rain and plenty of grass:

وَسِي تَلَّهٖ وَسَ، مُنَدَّ مِثْرُونِي مِيَهٗ جِي،
 كَتَرِنَ كِيَتَا چَدِيَا، جِي مِثْرُونُ تِي مَسَ،
 گَا بَا مَتِي گَسَ، دُڪَ نَهٗ ڪَنَدَا دُپَرَا.

When it rains, it brings prosperity, in the season
 of rain.
 Those stubborn ones (cows) who would not allow
 themselves to be milked, have given up their
 abstinence.

The calves on their way are no more suffering nor
 weaklings.²

This verse depicts the environment of a countryside, with plenty of green grass that seems to have grown as the result of rain. There is no implication of cows being associated with the lower soul nor does it seem to have any other spiritual interpretation.

Rumi uses the images of the pig, horse, ass, wolf, cat, mouse

1. Shahvani, op. cit., pp.981-82.

2. Ibid., p.961.

and dog, all to represent the concept of *nafs* or sensual lust. Sometimes, however, he says that when these animals are trained they can carry their owner to his goal. 'Even the pig can reach a place superior to the Lion of the Sky (the Zodiacal sign Leo) from trying one sip of this wine.'¹ Rumi also mentions the dog with reference to the Seven sleepers in the Qur'an.²

Shah Abd al-Latif does not mention as many animals as Rumi, but he does speak about some of them. For example he treats the dog in the same manner as Rumi does:

كُتُو كَرْتِي هَذِيُون، جَوَانِمَرْدِ جَكْرُ كَاءِ
الدُّنْيَا جَيْفَةٌ وَ طَلًّا بِهَا كَلَاب، اِي هِيْن سِيْن لَاءِ

The dog chews bones, but the true herè eats his liver.*
'The world is a corpse and those who yearn for it
are dogs.' This you should understand.³

Shah Abd al-Latif uses the image of the horse and the lion in *Sur Kedar* in connection with the bravery of Imam Husain. Moreover, the lion is used as a title for Ali in a number of places:

گَهَوَزُو گَهَوْتَ پَلَايْتُو، مَتْسَ زَيْنَ دَرِي،
عَلِي شِيرُ پُتْنِ كِي، اُيُو سَدَّ كَرِي،
قَضَا كَنَ تَرِي! جِنَّ اَمْرُ اِلَهِی آيُو.

The bridegroom⁴ made ready the horse
by putting the saddle on it.
Ali, the lion, stands and calls his sons.

1. Schim, nel, op. cit., p.97.

2. Ibid., pp.97-102.

3. Shahvani, op. cit., p.459.

4. i.e. Husain.

* i.e. suffers silently.

How could the predestined waver?
This was the command of God.¹

So neither the horse nor the lion are used by Shah Abd al-Latif to represent the carnal soul, nor have these images as many connotations as in the work of Rumi who uses them in both senses. Rumi distinguishes between the worldly lion which seeks prey and the lion of the Lord that seeks freedom and death. He even alludes to Ali as God's lion. Rumi is fascinated by the lion's majesty and power and compares Shams al-Din to a lion or a panther who is the master of all lions, and lives in the forest of the lover's soul. The lion is likened to the Beloved or the Perfect man.²

Apart from actual animals, Rumi refers to imaginary animals like Buraq and Duldul. The former is mentioned with reference to the Prophet Muhammad who is said to have ascended to heaven, into the Divine Presence on a buraq. The *buraq* is described as the animal of love, a winged horse, which is in contrast to the baser soul. Rumi makes Shams al-Din ride the swift *buraq* of love. The *duldul* is mentioned as Ali's riding animal, a noble, white mule.³

Shah Abd al-Latif also uses these animals in similar contexts. For example about duldul he says:

كَرْبَلَا كَعُورِي، دُلْدُل رَتَا پِيرَ،
سُونِ دِينَدي شیر، مَتَاءِ سِجِ مُرکیو.

Karbala became coloured (red); the feet of the
duldul became red,

1. Shahvani, op. cit., p.931.

2. Schimmel, op. cit., p.105.

3. Ibid.

While the lion¹ kept attacking until the sun went down.²

Rumi mentions several other animals, including the elephant which is interpreted on the one hand as the lower qualities of body "which are subdued by the lion 'heart' or the miraculous soul-birds".³ On the other hand, the elephant is equated with the seeker, like whom it is ever yearning for its original home India. Only a strong animal like an elephant can dream about India, which is said to be the spiritual land. Rumi speaks of spiritual Hindustan, to which Ibrahim b. Adham returned after breaking his worldly chains. Bayazid Bistami's encounter with Khizr is again compared with elephants seeing India.⁴

Shah'Abdal-Latif does not refer to any of the Sufis mentioned above in the context of the elephant, nor does he mention the elephant in captivity yearning for its home, India. Nevertheless he does speak of chains which the soul breaks with one pull, to free itself to return to the beloved:

سَو نِير دَه دَاوِيُون، پَنْدَرَه پَنْدَ پِيَاَس،
جَدِه سَجَن يَادِ پِيَاَس، چَرَك چِنَايِيْن هِيَكَرِي.

It was tied with hundreds of chains,
ten shackles and fifteen ropes.
When it recollected the beloved,
it broke them all with just one pull.⁵

This reminds one of Ibrahim b. Adham breaking worldly chains but there is no reference to him. In the above verse, the

1. I.e. Husain.

2. Shahvani, op. cit., p.941.

3. Schimmel, op. cit., p.107.

4. Ibid., p.108.

5. Shahvani, op. cit., pp.182-3.

subject is ambiguous. It either refers to the camel, which is more probable, because the usage is in *Sur Khanbhat* where the poet has already mentioned the camel, or this is a direct reference to the soul.

Shah Abd al-Latif refers to the elephant in the context of the story of the blind man and the elephant. As Schimmel has pointed out, this story was used by Abu Hamid al-Ghazzali, then by Sana'i, and later by Rumi.¹ It is most probable that Shah Abd al-Latif came to know about this image from Rumi. He comments on it in the following words:

مُثِي هَاتِي تِي مَامِرُو، اَچِي ڪَئُو اَنَدَن،
 مَنَّاڙِين هَتَن سِين، اڪِين ڪِين پَسَن.
 فِي الْحَقِيقَتِ فِيلَ ڪِي، سَچا سُڃاڻَن،
 سَنَدِي سَرْدَارَن، بَصِيرَتَ بِيٺا ڪَرِي.

The blind ones have begun to argue over the
 dead elephant.

They cannot see it, but they feel it with
 their hands

In reality, the people with sight can only
 perceive it.

It is the sight of the chiefs²
 that makes us see things.³

The elephant is mentioned in a number of other places in his work, as for example in *Sur Bilawal* and *Sur Kedaro* where Shah Abd al-Latif talks of a battlefield where horses and camels are used.

1. Schimmel, op. cit., p.39.

2. I.e. spiritually-guided or knowledgeable people who can help others on the path of spirituality.

3. Shahvani, op. cit. p.1008.

With regard to bird imagery, Rumi speaks of the rose and the nightingale's longing which reflect his own yearning in separation from Shams al-Din, his beloved.¹ In the work of Shah Abd al-Latif the imagery of the rose and the nightingale, common in Islamic countries as well as in India, is not found.

Rumi refers to several birds and insects, as having religious significance. For example he describes the bee, which feeds on pure, sweet honey as in the Qur'an. The bee is likened by Rumi to the believer who is nourished by Divine light. There is also reference to ants, in relation to Solomon. They are described as small earthbound creatures, which are afraid of the power of love. He even mentions the snake saying that if the 'ant' which represents lust is not killed, it will become a snake.²

Shah Abd al-Latif rarely describes birds and insects in the manner in which they are treated in the Qur'an. Shah Abd al-Latif also refers to snakes, describing them as extremely dangerous creatures, whose bite immediately kills the person.

سَنَہَا یَانِءَ مَرَسَبَ، سُکَا جَنِینِ پِیْتِ،
تَنِینِ جِی جَہِیْتِ، جُنْگَنِ کِی جَوکو تِی.

Do not consider snakes as being weak,
with tapered stomachs
Their attack can be very dangerous
even to brave ones.³

Rumi speaks of the pigeon, comparing the fluttering of its wings to a lover's heart, when he approaches the beloved. A pigeon that lives on the roof of the beloved is considered to be more precious than anything in the world. A pigeon that lives in

1. Schimmel, op. cit., pp.114-15.

2. Schimmel, op. cit., pp.108-109.

3. Shahvani, op. cit., p.1220.

the sanctuary in Mecca attains eternal life.¹ In the work of Shah Abd al-Latif the pigeon is not mentioned directly. However, the birds referred to in *Sur-Kedaro* as taking the message to Medina about the death of Husain can be assumed to be pigeons.²

Rumi does not like the crow at all, calling it ugly and dirty. He considers that it lives on unclean food, although it can be trained to give up its bad habits. In general, Shah Abd al-Latif seems to be fond of the crow, although he also sometimes calls it dirty because it lives on filth. Nevertheless, the crow image is used by our poet because of its popularity among the village women, who give their messages to crows for their beloved. The rural women address the crow in words of endearment because it brings messages from their beloved:

ڪانگل ڦرين جا! آچي وائي وڻ،
 تو ۾ پوءِ بهار جي، مُشڪ ڪٿوري مَن،
 آچي عَجِيبن جو اورانگهچ اڱڻ،
 توکي پسي تَن، سورننا صاف ٿي.

*Kangal*⁴ of my beloved! come and bring me the
 message (of love)

In you is the smell of spring, and great quantities
 of musk fragrance

Come (since) you have crossed the courtyard of the
 beloved.

A look at you makes all pains and aches disappear.⁵

1. Schimmel, op. cit., p.120.

2. Shahvani, op. cit., p.936.

3. Schimmel, op. cit., p.118.

4. *Kang* means crow in Sindhi. The addition of *a*/as a suffix makes it a word of endearment. Since the crow is the messenger of love here, it is addressed in loving terms.

5. Shahvani, op. cit., pp.1198-99.

In contrast Rumi does not have such words of endearment for a crow, which, according to him, distracts lovers and disrupts their union. The rooster, on the other hand, is highly praised by Rumi, as it calls man to prayer. It is a punctual bird and reminds one of one's duties.¹

Shah Abd al-Latif also comments on the crow's negative aspects and bad behaviour.

سو ڪانگ مَر قاصدُ ڪَر، جو سدا ڏوندي ڏوندي ڪي،
 ڪم ڪندو پهنجي پيٽ جي، ڪم ويندو دوسن ڏر
 جه جي ٻوليائي ”ٻر ٻر“ سو نياپا نيني رهيو!

Do not make the crow your messenger,
 who always searches for filth.
 Will it satisfy its stomach or will it go to your
 friend's house?
 He whose speech is *brr brr*²
 what message can he take (for you)?³

Rumi is fond of the hawk or falcon, which he conceives as the symbol of the highly born soul. Although the hawk is a bird of prey, killing and eating other small birds, Rumi nevertheless praises it, saying that it has to teach other birds a lesson. Then he gives an example of a Sufi master who, out of necessity, has to be harsh to his students.⁴ It seems that the poet believes that the use of strength and even cruelty is permissible in certain cases.

1. Schimmel, op. cit., p. 121.

2. I.e. the sound of the crow, which he considers very annoying and unpleasant to hear.

3. Shahvani, op. cit., p. 1202.

4. Schimmel, op. cit., p. 117.

There are references to the hawk only once or twice in the work of Shah Abd al-Latif.¹ His choice of bird to represent the pure soul is the swan which he considers a gentle, pure and beautiful bird. Sometimes he uses the swan and peacock as synonymous, because of their beauty and special qualities. According to him the swan eats only pearls.² He says:

اڪڙيون اوڙا ۾ اُڀو تڪي تار،
پٿون جي پاتار، هنج ٿين جو هيرئون.

It stands and searches in the deep vastness of the lake
The swan is used to the particles (pearls)
which lie at the bottom (of the sea).³

He contrasts the swan with the seagulls, waterfowls, herons, crows and other birds which he considers as unclean because they live on filth and fish. He comments:

ٻائڪ ڇوٽو جن جو، هنج حُصوري سي،
چلڙ ۾ چُهنب هڻي، مڇي کين نه اي،
لوڪ نه لکنا تي، جيلاه پوئن ٻگهن گڏا.

Their food is precious stones; the swans belong
to that species.

They never put their beaks in the filth,
to eat the fish.

They cannot be distinguished by the common
folk, because they mix among the 'waterfowl'.⁴

Rumi also describes different types of waterfowl or ducks,

1. Shahvani, op. cit., p.1222.

2. Ibid., p.1209.

3. Ibid., pp.1209-10.

4. Shahvani, op. cit., p.1217.

saying that they do not belong to the earth and that they should therefore go and swim in the Divine Sea.¹ As already mentioned, Shah Abd al-Latif warns the swan not to keep company with such birds, because they are unclean and will bring a bad name to the swan.²

Here one cannot overlook the difference of approach of the two poets. Although dealing with the same topic, i.e. the human soul, their presentation is quite different. There is a display of masculine strength in the hawk symbol used by Rumi, whereas the choice of the swan by Shah Abd al-Latif reflects his gentle and non-violent character. It seems that Pir Husam al-Din Rashidi must have thought about this aspect in both poets when he commented in one of his presidential speeches on the anniversary of Shah Abd al-Latif:

In the *Masnavi* of Rumi there is no such tenderness. (softness نرمي) and gentleness (لطافت) as one would find in the *Risalo*. It is as gentle and soft as pure silk, which is pleasant to the touch.³

Like Rumi, Shah Abd al-Latif uses bird imagery to express Sufi ideas:

سو پکي سو پچرو، سو سر، سو ئي هنج،
 پيهي جان پروژو، مون پهنجو منجه،
 ذيل جه جو دنجه، سو ماري تو منجه قري.

The bird, the cage, the reed and the swan
 are in reality one.

1. Schimmel, op. cit., p.122.

2. Shahvani, op. cit., pp.12, 13.

3. Rashidi, Pir Husam al-Din, *Latif Salgrah Makhzan*, Hyderabad Sind, 1951, No.3, p.13.

When I delved down within myself I realised
that what is hurting my body, that hunter is
roaming around within.¹

Rumi refers to the crane along with the stork, crow and raven, who cannot appreciate the laments of the nightingale. He likens it to the common people, who cannot understand the songs of lovers and saints.² Thus the crane for Rumi is an insignificant bird. In contrast, for Shah Abd al-Latif it is worthy of praise.

It is interesting to see how Shah Abd al-Latif transforms Rumi's idea of the elephant's dream of 'spiritual Hindustan' to the dream of the *kunj* or crane, who is reminded of its chicks on the Roh mountain;³ in one of the verses our poet comments:

اُتَرَ ذِي آلَاپْ، كَالهَانَكُونِ كُونَجَ كَرِي،
پَرِين پَسِي مَنَجِه خَوَابِ، وَهَاتِي وَايُونِ كَرِي.

Since yesterday, the crane has been calling in the
north

Because she has seen the beloved in a dream,
she is crying at that late hour.⁴

Here, one can say that the crane in the poet's work represents the seeker, who is ever longing for his eternal home. Our poet uses Roh instead of Hindustan as the spiritual home.

Shah Abd al-Latif also praises birds for their unity among themselves, since they fly in groups, and our poet recommends that people should learn from them the lesson of unity:—

1. Shahvani, op. cit., p.1219.

2. Schimmel, op. cit., p.116.

3. Shahvani, op. cit., p.1263.

4. Ibid., p.1264.

وَجَرَّ كَعُو وَتَن، پَرَتِ نہ چَنَن پاڻ ۾،
پَسو پَکِیَرَن، ماڙهَنان مِیٺ گهڻو.

They fly in flocks, and never break their love
among themselves.

Look at the birds. There is more friendliness
among birds than human beings.¹

This verse strongly suggests that the ideas expressed in Shah Abd al-Latif's poetry were not confined to Sufism alone.

Rumi refers to a number of imaginary birds like the *huma* and *simurgh*, which are mentioned by earlier Sufis. Some of the names of birds he mentions are also found in the Qur'an, such as the *hudhud* or hoopoe and others.² There are no references in the work of Shah Abd al-Latif to such exotic birds, which are not found in Sind.

Apart from the animals and birds mentioned above, Rumi mentions the crocodile which represents this world, which is always ready to eat the greedy person who is never satisfied.³

Shah Abd al-Latif speaks of crocodiles, alligators, and different types of fish which are all ready and waiting to tear Suhni to pieces. Here again the reference is to a local story.

گهڙي گهڙو هٿ ڪري، الاهي تهار!
جَنگه جَرُڪي وات ۾، سِسي کي سِيسار،
چُوڙا پيڙا چڪ ۾، لڙ ۾ لڙيس وار،
لکين چُهَنيس لوهُئيُون، تيليُون تَرَنوُن ڌار،
مَرِيا مَچَ هزار، پاڳا تيندي سوهُئي!

1. Shahvani, op. cit., p.1263.

2. Schimmel, op. cit., p.108.

3. Ibid., p.112.

She entered with an earthenware jar in her hand,
and relying on God.

Her leg was in the mouth of *jarko*,¹ and her head
went to the alligator.

Her bangles were bent in the mire,
and her hair was floating in the muddy water

Hundreds and thousands of fish (*lohinyun*)² and
other dangerous sea-creatures from far away,
assembled around her

Thousands of crocodiles gathered; thus Suhni is
going to be torn to pieces.³

Apart from the animals and birds already mentioned, there are references in the work of Shah Abd al-Latif to other birds which are typically local birds of the poet's country, such as the *babiho* (i.e. the desert bird), *taro*⁴ (a desert cuckoo) and the *chiho*⁵ and others.

IMAGES FROM DAILY LIFE

Rumi and Shah Abd al-Latif both use everyday imagery to symbolise the spiritual concepts. At times their images are more or less of similar nature, but one notices a marked contrast in them. Rumi's imagery is mostly urban, and that found in the poetry of Shah Abd al-Latif is predominantly rural. Given the different environment of the two poets, this is not surprising.

1. A large freshwater fish.
2. River fish.
3. Shahvani, op. cit., p.288.
4. Ibid., pp.957, 969.
5. A small bird with red spots.

Rumi likens the world to a millstone and man to wheat, which out of necessity needs to be crushed. The fact that the grains suffer and are crushed under the millstone is a necessary requirement for them to be transformed into something valuable.¹

Shah Abd al-Latif also believes that a lover has to suffer in order to attain a higher goal. He gives the example of a kiln, which must burn patiently day and night, without allowing heat to escape, so that the required results may be achieved:

نِيَهُ نِهَائِينَءِ جَن، ءِ يَكِيو كُوهُ نَه يَكِيين!
 چَرَجِيرِي چَدِي، تَه رَجَج پَچَندَا كِنِءِ
 تُون پُون كَرِيچ تَن، ءِ جَن ءِ كُنْيَارَ كَرَن كَم سِين.

Why don't you hide your love like a kiln?
 If the flames escape, then how will the pots
 be baked?
 You should do the same, as the potters do
 with their work.²

Shah Abd al-Latif refers in another context to the beating and smelting of iron by the blacksmith. The iron goes through much affliction, at first being put in the furnace, and then being beaten out, receiving hard blows. All this suffering is inflicted by the beloved, who in this imagery is the blacksmith. This image symbolises the necessity of man's suffering in this world at the hands of God, who in His greater wisdom makes men suffer for their own betterment.³

Shah Abd al-Latif speaks similarly of charcoal. He admires the patience of charcoal which twice undergoes the process of burning with patience:

1. Schimmel, op. cit., p.135.
2. Shahvani, op. cit., pp.1045-46.
3. Ibid., p.111.

هِي پَر اُڱارَن، ٻڌاهينَ ٻَرڻَ جِي،
هڪَ ڪُوري ڪاٺيا، ٻنَ ڏوڏي مَنجِهَ ڏَڳَن،
ڀاڻا لُهارَن، مِيڙي رَکيا مَڇَ لَئي.

It is the tradition of coals that they burn twice,
Once they are burnt in the furnace
then they burn again in the fire,
The blacksmith himself gathers them
and puts them in the flame.¹

Again in his choice of imagery, Shah Abd al-Latif concentrates on rural areas where he must have seen the wood being cut and burned in a flaming pit to be smothered into charcoal.

Rumi speaks of the waterwheel which makes a shrieking sound, symbolising the lover's complaints and lamentation.² Shah Abd al-Latif also speaks of the waterwheel but not of its sound. He refers to the water drawn by the waterwheel, and the sand which is mixed in it. He compares the inseparability of sand and water to the inseparability of the lover's soul from the beloved:

جَنءِ سِي ڪُوھِي نَارَ، وَھَن واري ڳاڏُٺان،
ھيڙو پريان ڌارَ، نبيريانس نہ نيري.

The same way as the water which is drawn from
the well by the waterwheel flows mixed with
sand

My heart, no matter how much I try, cannot be
separated from the beloved.³

Rumi writes several times about bathhouses (*hammam*) and

1. Shahvani, op. cit., p.111.

2. Schimmel, op. cit., p.136.

3. Shahvani, op. cit., p.1044.

bathing. He describes the need for bathing and the enjoyment of a hot bath. He also refers to bathers' pleasures and pictures on the walls of the bath houses which he describes in some detail. He uses the image of the bath for the purpose of expressing the concept of spiritual cleansing and purification.¹ Although his intention is to use this image for Sufi purposes, at the same time his choice of imagery reflects the urban life of Turkey and Iran. The bath houses in these two countries are of special significance. The bathhouse is not only a public place to wash in, it is also a place to meet friends and neighbours, to gossip and relax.

There are a few references to the *hammam* or hot bathhouse in the work of Shah Abd al-Latif. Here the image is used negatively:

جو ڳڙا جَھان ۾، هُئا مَنجِهَ حَمَامَ،
 آراماً آرڳ ٿئا، اوڏا نہ آرامَ
 ڪيائون قِيامَ آئون نہ چيندي اُن ري.

The yogis in the world were as if in a *hammam*
 They were far from rest and they did not approach
 rest.
 It is tragic, I cannot live without them.²

Elsewhere he says:

جڏائي جو جامُ ڏنائون ڏکي ڪي،
 منڱلُ منجهي مَن ۾ پارڻو هوتَ حَمَامُ .
 آرڳ ٿيو آرامُ، ڪاڪلُ پسي ڪانڌَ جو.

They gave to me, the suffering one, a cup of separation
 They set alight the stove in my heart,
 and the beloved lit the *hammam*

1. Schimmel, op. cit., p.133.

2. Shahvani, op. cit., p.1103.

The peace of mind vanished, after seeing the lock of hair
of the beloved.¹

From both these examples, it is clear that this is not an original image from the poet's own experience but that he may have borrowed it from Rumi. Shāh Abd al-Latif is aware of the existence of bathhouses but his feelings towards them are different from those of Rumi. This reflects the difference of climate between Turkey and Sind. The hot bath which is enjoyable in the former, is associated with the fire of torture by our poet from Sind. Although Rumi and Shah Abd al-Latif both liken the world to a *hammam*, in Rumi one notices the heat only after leaving the bath but enjoys it while one is inside. Shah Abd al-Latif also speaks of the world as a *hammam* but the yogis or true *saliks* suffer the torture and heat of the world while they are in it, not after leaving.

In rural areas, such as the one where Shah Abd al-Latif lived, bathing was either a private matter carried out at home or an activity engaged in on the river's edge or at the well by poor people. So there is no concept of bathhouses or ceremonial baths in the work of Shah Abd al-Latif, unlike in the work of Rumi. Nevertheless, in exceptional cases one does find an example of a washing place as in the folk story of Mumal, a rich princess. Here the poet depicts the life-style of the privileged classes.

جہ تَر دُورُون، دُون، چوٹا چندن چک ڪئو،
اچن پونر پنيولئا، پاڻي تھين پُون،
راول رتو رُون، ڪو وه لڳو واسئين.

At the washing place, where the friends (girls)
wash their long hair full of musk.
the black bees are intoxicated and fall
into that water.

1. Ibid., p.412.

2. Schimmel, op. cit., p.133.

The princes who have savoured their fragrance
shed tears of blood.¹

In order to illustrate the secrets of spiritual love, Rumi describes in the most intimate detail the sensual relationship between husbands and wives in their private bedrooms. Then he compares such worldly union of man with spiritual union, concluding that the former requires a 'bath' because of pollution, whereas the spiritual union does not. He even exhorts man not to involve himself in sexual relationships because this will wear him out but, to seek love with the divine spirit.

Similarly Shah Abd al-Latif takes images from daily life, and from his own environment to express Sufi ideas. He refers to lovers and beloveds by using folk stories. He does not, however, describe in detail their relationship on a sensual level, nor does he mention their bedrooms. In referring to his heroines' longings for their lovers or husbands, he does not describe or comment on any physical contact between the couple. This is in contrast to Rumi's manner. On certain occasions Shah Abd al-Latif does mention the bed, but, it is the empty bed which she sees deserted that makes the heroine cry:

رُبانِ تِي، راڻا! هَندَ نهارِ تو حجرا،
پيئي ڪه ڪُننِ تِي، ٿڻا پلنگِ پراڻا،
دَريائي دُوڻا ٿڻا، وَرِ رِي وهانِ،
جايُون، گل، جَبات، وڻ تو رِي ڪُوماڻا!
ميندرا! ماڻا تو رِي ڪنڊيس ڪن سين.

Rana! I am looking at the bed and the room
and crying
The cots and the bedstead have become dusty
and worn out.

1. Shahvani, op. cit., p.720.

2. Schimmel, op. cit., pp.131.32.

The pillows are lying useless and dusty
without the husband.

What shall I do with these houses, flowers,
musk and trees without you?¹

Maindhra! in your absence who is going to flatter me.

On rare occasions the poet mentions the beloved lying beside him in bed, but here again he does not go into details. He says for example:

اڱڻ تازي، بَهرِ ڪُنڊيُون، پڪا پت سُهڻ،
سُرهي سِيڄ، پاسي ڀرين، مَر پُٽا مِيهَ وَسَن،
اسان ۽ ڀرين، شال هُون بَرابَر ڏيهڙا.

In the courtyard are horses, and outside are
(buffaloes with) twisted horns.

And the courtyard may be adorned with a
thatched roof

Sweet fragrant bed, having the beloved beside (me)

Let the rain keep raining

May the days for me and my beloved be such as
these for ever.

This is an idealised, romantic picture in which there is an emphasis on fragrance and rural prosperity and calm.

Shah Abd al-Latif lived in an agricultural country and it is not surprising that he should use farming images in his poetry unlike Rumi. Shah Abd al-Latif comments on the preparation of the peasants, when there are signs of rain:

اُڄ پڻ اُترَ پارَ ڏي، تازي ڪي توار،

1. Shahvani, op. cit., p.747.

2. Shahvani, op. cit., p.963.

هارن ھر سنيهايا، سرها ٿئا سنگهار،
اڄ پڻ منھجي يار، وسڻ جا ويس ڪيا.

Even today *taro*¹ have been calling on the
northern side.
The farmers have prepared their ploughs,
and the countryfolk are cheerful
Today my beloved has worn the dress of rain.²

THE IMAGERY OF FOOD

Rumi, like other Muslim poets, compares the lover's heart and the torture of separation to the *kabab*.³ Shah Abd al-Latif follows the same tradition, saying that the test of the true lover is to make his liver and kidneys into *kabab*. According to him, love is not a child's game. It demands the sacrifice of the heart and every part of the body and soul.

هيءَ هيءَ وهي هاءَ من ۾ محبوبين جي،
جير جوش جلايا، بڪين ڀري باه،
پسو مچ مٽاءَ جي ويساه نہ وسهو.

Alas, alas! within the soul is the deep and
secret cry for the beloved,
Out of passion the liver burns,
and the kidneys also blaze in fire,
Look at the flames over me, if you do not
believe me.⁴

1. The desert cuckoo, whose call farmers take as a prediction of rain.
2. Shahvani, op. cit., p.957.
3. Schimmel, op. cit., p.138.
4. Shahvani, op. cit., p.103.

There are several verses of this type in the work of Shah Abd al-Latif where the lover's suffering in separation is compared to that of an organ on the fire. But there are other verses where he describes the lover's body being cut into pieces in the manner of a butcher. Here again, the poetry of Shah Abd al-Latif resembles that of Rumi, who similarly compares the beloved to a butcher, who sells hearts and heads.¹

Shah Abd al-Latif expresses his views on the topic as follows:

كُهْنِ ۽ ڪوئين، اِي پَر سَندي سڄئين،
 سُورِي چاڙهيو سُپرين، ڏنپَ ڏيهائي ڏين،
 وينا وره وٺين، آءُ واڍوڙئا وهاءُ تون.

They call and slaughter.

This is the custom of friends

The beloveds hang lovers on the gallows and daily
 cauterise them

They distribute the misery of separation.

Come wounded one! and buy it (misery) from them.²

From this example one can deduce that there is a slight difference between Shah Abd al-Latif and Rumi. For Shah Abd al-Latif the beloved is not only a butcher but is even more cruel than that, since he or she constantly inflicts torture on the lover. The lover is so devoted that he not only withstands that treatment but even buys the treatment from him.

Here it seems that both poets are alluding to mystic asceticism, saying that what people might consider cruel, is in fact a sign of God's pleasure with the seeker, whose patience and loyalty he is testing.

Although Rumi constantly emphasises the importance of fast-

1. Schimmel, op. cit., p.141.

2. Shahvani, op. cit., p.85.

ing and eating less in order to achieve spiritual advancement, he nevertheless describes in great detail the dishes which may be found in the kitchens of the upper classes in Konya. He describes every type of dish from main meals like *birryani*, *sambusa*, several meat dishes and roasted game to sweet-meats like *halva*, *paluda*, *qata'if* and many more. Each of these dishes of course symbolises the spiritual experiences of a lover, in such a way that worldly pleasures are compared to spiritual pleasures, showing the superiority of the latter. It is interesting to notice that Rumi compares the sweetness of Shams al-Din to a variety of sweet-meats. He even speaks of various types of fruit and vegetables mostly available in the city.¹

These references to rich exotic dishes indicate the influence of social environment on the poet. Being a city dweller and having close contacts with the high strata of society, his food imagery naturally reflects their way of life.

The treatment of food imagery in Shah Abd al-Latif is in marked contrast to that of Rumi's. His imagery is not from the upper class kitchen or the food prepared there but it is taken from the life of the poor people. One of the dishes he mentions is the *pullao*, offered to Marui by Umar in the fort (where she is imprisoned). This also she rejects by expressing her preference for her simple food:

آئين ڪي چاڙهين، دُٺُ ڏيهائي، سُوَرا!
 سَٿا ڪئو، سَيِّدُ چي، سائون سُڪائين،
 منجهان لَنبَ لَٽِيئُ چي، چائُرُ ڪئو چاڙهين،
 پُلاؤ نہ پاڙين، عُمَرَ! آراڙي سين.

Sumra! daily they bring *duth*² and cook it.
 They dry the green grass in abundance

1. Schimmel, op. cit., pp.139–149.

2. Wild grass and its grain.

From *lumb*¹ says Latif, they cook grains like rice
 Umar! they never prefer the *pullao*² to (the food
 prepared from) grass.³

Shah Abd al-Latif gives a picture of rural life showing how the peasants survive on the flowers and fruits of scanty wild shrubs. In spite of their poverty they are quite content and grateful to God for providing them with rain water to drink and abundant bushes, trees and shrubs to serve as their source of survival.

His heroine Marui takes pride in her simple way of life and proudly tells Umar about her people's well-being as follows:

تَنِ وَهَيْنَ وَيَتِيحَنَ مِ، سَدَائِينَ سُكَارُ،
 چُنْدِيُو، آثِيُو چَارْهِيُو، سَنَدُو دَوْتَرِنِ دَارُ،
 جَنِ جو وَيَزَنِ سِينِ وَاپَارُ، سِي دَوْتِي هُونِ نَهْ دُپَرَا.

The resourceful countrymen are always blessed
 with plenty (food)

We pick the branches of capers and pluck the
 fruit and cook it.

Those whose dealing is with trees and plants,
 those *Dothi*⁴ are never feeble.⁵

Elsewhere the poet makes Marui depict the environment in which she and her people live and enjoy life. She is cheerfully thinking of the days of her freedom, when she will go back to live again with her friends in the countryside:

1. Wild grass.
2. Rice prepared with meat.
3. Shahvani, op. cit., p.807.
4. Countrymen who eat *duth*, i.e. wild grass and its grain.
5. Shahvani, op. cit., p.808.

وائي

ويڙيجن ڏي ويندي، عُمرا آئون ماروڙن ڏي ويندي،
ڏيه ڏاڏاڻين پڪڙين.

سَگر ساهيڙين سين، ساڙيه منجهه ستيندي،
ڏيه ڏاڏاڻين پڪڙين.

اُنا ميه ملير ۾، ڏاڳا ڏهر ڏوڏي،
ڏيه ڏاڏاڻين پڪڙين.

عُمرا اُنهن ڏيه جا، ڪوڏر قوت ڪريندي،
ڏيه ڏاڏاڻين پڪڙين.

گولون گولاڙن جيون، جهي ساڻ جهٽيندي،
ڏيه ڏاڏاڻين پڪڙين.

ڪوڪڙ ڪنڊيرن ۾، ڦوڪو، ڦڪ ڀريندي،
ڏيه ڏاڏاڻين پڪڙين.

عیدن برادن تي، ڪه مانڌائون ڪيندي،
ڏيه ڏاڏاڻين پڪڙين.

پُسي ڪاڻي پيٽ ۾، ڏوڙا ڏن ان ڏيندي،
ڏيه ڏاڏاڻين پڪڙين.

Vai

I shall go to my countrymen,
Umar! I shall go to my Maruara¹
In the thatched huts of my grandparents' country
Along with my friends, I shall collect *sinnar*²
in my home town.

In the thatched huts of my grandparents' country
At the time of the rains in Malir, I shall wash

1. Country folk of Marui.
2. The pods of a tree called *Kando*, which are eaten by poor people.

my tattered, coarse clothes.
 In the thatched huts of my grandparents' country.
 Umar, I shall eat the wild fruit of that country
 In the thatched huts of my grandparents' country
 I shall pluck the round fruit of the *golara*¹ creeper
 and catch it with a bounce.
 In the thatched huts of my grandparents' country
 I shall take the dry fruit from the storage vessel,
 blow it (to clean it) and eat handfuls of it.
 In the thatched huts of my grandparents' country
 At the time of the Id and festivities, I shall eat
 the *khiih*² and *mandhano*³
 In the thatched huts of my grandparents' country
 I shall eat the flower of the caper and pay its
 fruit as tax
 In the thatched huts of my grandparents' country.

Rumi and Shah Abd al-Latif both stress the importance of spiritual wine. Rumi quotes several references from the Qur'an, likening wine either to *Sharaban Tahuran*, which will be the reward in paradise, or to the *kausar* which is again a fountain in paradise. He speaks of spiritual wine which has the power to remove all pain and misery from men's hearts. Besides this, it has many mystic qualities so that whoever drinks it is enclosed with Divine experience.⁵

Shah Abd al-Latif also refers to this wine, likening it to the *Tahura* promised in the Qur'an:

1. A creeper which grows wild in Thar. Its fruit is eaten by the poor.
2. A kind of grass used for fodder.
3. Another species of grass.
4. Shahvani, op. cit., pp.824-25.
5. Schimmel, op. cit., pp.149-150.

وائي

وَتَانِ وَجْ مَرْمُونِ، مُهْجَوِ تَوْنِهِيْن تُونِ، كَوْنَه سُوْتِي كَو بِيَوِ،

وَتَانِ وَجْ مَرْمُونِ.

تُونِ تَلْهَانَكُرَ مَجْهِيْن، جَدِه ، كُنَ فَيَكُونِ،

وَتَانِ وَجْ مَرْمُونِ.

اَهْكِ رَسَجِ اَحْمَدَا، اَكْبَانِ سَوْزِهِي يُونِ،

وَتَانِ وَجْ مَرْمُونِ.

رَسَجِ مُحَمَّدَ كَارِثِي، جَتِي هُونْگَ نَه هُونِ،

وَتَانِ وَجْ مَرْمُونِ.

اَكْهَ هِنَ اُمَتَ جَوِ، اَهِيْن تَوْنِهِيْن تُونِ،

وَتَانِ وَجْ مَرْمُونِ.

دَجِ كَا لَتَ لَطِيْفَ كِي، طَهْوَرِ مَنَجْهَا تُونِ،

وَتَانِ وَجْ مَرْمُونِ.

Vai

Do not go away from me, for me you are the only
one, none else will hear it.

Since (the time you said) 'Be' and it 'Became',
from that time you are within me.

Do not go away from me.

Ahmad! help me in trouble, on the narrow path
which lies ahead

Do not go away from me.

Where there will not be a sound,

Help me, O Muhammad!

Do not go away from me.

You are the guide of these believers, you are the
only one

Do not go away from me.

Give a cup of Tahura to Latif

Do not go away from me.²

1. This is probably a reference to the grave.

2. Shahvani, op. cit., p.1096.

The fact that in this *vai* Shah Abd al-Latif is actually asking for heavenly wine is significant. His treatment of this image is ambivalent. Elsewhere in his work he comments that such rewards of paradise and heavenly wine are hindrances on the path of love. For a real lover of God these are insignificant things. What is important for him is the presence of God, i.e. *wisal*:

پي مَ طهُورُ، وان؟ اورانگهي اوريان،
وچان جي وصالَ کي، سي سڀ اُجُورُ،
حاصلُ حُضُورُ، سمي جي سڀ ٿيبي.

Do not drink *Tahura* (wine of paradise),
You must go further than this.
Such rewards are merely in-between,
and are only hindrances for the meeting
(i.e. with God – *wisal*).
Everything will be attained by the presence of
Samma.¹

The above verse reminds one of Rabi'ah al-Adawiyya, who is not concerned about paradise and heavenly rewards, her love for God being for the sake of love.³

Shah Abd al-Latif makes a distinction between spiritual wine and worldly wine. Spiritual wine, he says, cannot be bought for money, but whoever buys it with his life will be very fortunate. Another characteristic of this wine of love is that it kills whoever drinks it. He says:

جي آئي سڪَ سُڪَ جي، تہ ون؟ ڪلاڙن ڪائي،
لاهي رڪَ لطيفُ جي، مَتَوَتِ مائي،

1. Shahvani, op. cit., pp.1281–82.
2. This is a reference to Samma, a king, Tamachi, but here it means God.
3. Smith, Margaret, *Rabi'a the Mystic and her Fellow Saints in Islam*, Cambridge, 1928, pp.98.99.

تَکَ دِیَی پَکَ پِی تون، گَھوَت! مَنجَها گَھاتی،
جو وَرَنَہ وَھاتی، سو سِرَ وَتِ سَرو ساھنگو.

If you are longing for a sip, then go to the
wine makers,
Cut off your head and lay it beside the wine jar,
O bridegroom! swallow a sip of this strong, thick
wine.
That (wine) which intoxicates brave youths
is cheaply attained in return for your neck.¹

Rumi and Shah Abd al-Latif both speak of 'themagical quality of this wine of love and the Divine cupbearer'.² Shah Abd al-Latif speaks of wine and its intoxication in the following words:

وَ تِ وَتِ وَتِی مِ، مَتَ مَتَ مَنَدِ پَتِو،
قَدَرُ کَیْفَ کَلارَ جو، پِیاکَن پَتِو،
اَچَن دُرُس دُکَان تِی، کَئِدُ قَبُولُ کِئِو،
سُرْھا سِر دِئِو، چَکَن سُرِکَ سَیْدُ چِی.

Each cup and each jar of wine has a different
taste
Only those who drink know the worth of the
intoxication of that wine
They come straight to the wine shop
accepting (the condition of giving) their neck
They are delighted to taste a sip, says Sayyid,
and to give their lives.³

On a more mundane level there is, however, another aspect of the treatment of the image of wine by Shah Abd al-Latif. He points out the dangers of wine-drinking and blames the wine-sel-

1. Shahvani, op. cit., p.74.
2. Schimmel, op. cit., p. 151.
3. Shahvani, op. cit., p.119.

ler for exploiting young people and being even the cause of their death.

مَوَكِّي چَوَكِي نَهْ تِي، اَصْل اوچِي ذاتِ،
وَيُونُ دِيئي واتِ، مَتارا جِه مَارِئا.

The wine-seller cannot be beneficial,
Because he is basically of a low caste,
By giving cups (of wine) to young people
he has killed them.¹

Both Rumi and Shah Abd al-Latif make a distinction between ordinary drinkers and those who are spiritually intoxicated and who therefore long for more wine. To sum up, it can be said that the two poets treat the image of wine in more or less the same way.

HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL ALLUSIONS

In the work of Rumi, one finds numerous allusions to a long list of personalities from Islamic sources. He mentions the Prophet Muhammad, as well as the Rightly-Guided Caliphs, and also narrates some stories attributed to each companion of the Prophet. He also relates certain anecdotes about the Sunis and Shi'ites, and the martyrs of Karbala'.²

Shah Abd al-Latif does not narrate any story about the Prophet or the four companions, but he refers to the Prophet Muhammad as a blessing to mankind in a number of his verses. There are only a few verses in the whole of the *Risalo* where he mentions the companions of the Prophet, whereas the whole of *Sur Kedaro* is dedicated to Imam Husain and other members of

1. Shahvani, op. cit., p.117.
2. Schimmel, op. cit., pp.184-85.
3. Shahvani, op. cit., pp.921-948.

his family, who were treacherously killed by Yazid in Karbala'. Like Rumi¹ our poet speaks about Imam Ali as the lion of God and his sons and the bravery of Imam Husain and other princes, who fought on the battlefield. He also pays tribute to them for their many qualities, such as uprightness, patience and courage in standing up against an enemy more powerful than themselves. For example he says:-

ڪَربَلا جي پَڙ ۾ خِیما ڪوڙيائون،
جَهِڙو یَزید سَا مُهُون، جُنبِي جوڙيائون،
مُه تہ موڙيائون، پَسِي تاءِ تَرارِ جو.

They fixed their tents in the battlefield of
karbala.

They stood against Yazid and
devotedly engaged themselves in the fight

At the sight and heat of swords,
they did not retreat.²

Rumi speaks at length about other personalities of early Islamic history. He refers to the representatives of different schools of thought such as Jabarites, Qadarites, and Mu'tazilites. He uses one particular religious group in his poetry – *Ikhwan al-Safa*, the 'Pure Brethren', as a symbol of spiritual purity and loyalty.³

On the other hand, one does not find such references in the work of Shah Abd al-Latif. This may be because his audience consisted mainly of illiterate rural people who would not have understood his allusions. His themes are, therefore, simple, being taken from everyday life.

Rumi also makes reference to figures from Islamic history like the Ghaznavid ruler Mahmud. He even speaks of the Saljuq

1. Schimmel, op. cit., p.185.

2. Shahvani, op. cit., p.926.

3. Schimmel, op. cit., p.187.

ruler, Sultan Sanjar (d.1157), representing him as a model ruler. He uses the name Sanjar, with those of other ancient rulers, as well as some heroes of pre-Islamic Persian mythology like Suhrab, Rustam and Kaikavus.¹

In the work of Shah Abd al-Latif, there are no references to figures from Islamic history nor to rulers contemporary with the author, such as the Kalhora king of Sind or the Mughal rulers of India.² But he does praise the rule of Samma and Sumra who were kings of Sind. The above mentioned two Sindhi dynasties existed hundreds of years before Shah Abd al-Latif. Most of his heroes are local and from Sind. He remembers rulers for the various good qualities they possessed, and commemorates them for being true to the local traditions of Sind.

In *Sur Bilawal* the altruism of Jadam Jakhiro³ (a Samma ruler) is put to the test by the ladies of the Sumra royal family, who request him to give them *Sam* or protection. Shah Abd al-Latif praises Jakhiro for giving *Sam* or protection to ladies. *Sam* is the best example of altruism in Sindhi society. The weaker party or person takes *Sam* from a stronger person. Giving *Sam* implies taking an oath to stand by that person irrespective of the consequences. In most cases women take *Sam* with a strong trusted man who can protect them from danger. Shah Abd al-Latif praises Jadam Jakhiro for sacrificing his own life and interests to those of others, to honour the Sindhi tradition of *Sam*:

عَلَاؤَالِدِينُ آئِيُو، كَلِي جَلِ چُجُگِيرُ،
 كَهِينِ عَيْنِ هَمَتُو، كَانَ جَهْلِينْدُو كِيرُ؟
 سُوْمِرِنِ سَامَ كَلِي، اَبَرِي كُو اُنَ پِرُ،
 هُو مُهَاتِيْنِ مِيْرُ پَرِ مُسْتُوْرَايِنِ مَارُو.

1. Ibid., p.187.

2. At the time of Shah Abd al-Latif, Sind was a vassal state of Mughal India.

3. Advani, op. cit., p.459.

Sultān Ala al-Dīn came along with his army.

None dared (to face him). Who is going to face the arrows?

Abro mounted the camel, because he gave the *Sam*.

He was the brave leader, but was killed because of the women.¹

In the above verses Jakhiro is referred to as Abro, who afforded refuge to the Sumra ladies and gave his life while defending the honour of these women and keeping his promise.

The poet admires Jakhiro's generosity and addresses him thus:²

اَبَرُو آڳاھن ۾ پَر جَھلو پارِي،
 سَمي سَوالن کي، ويلھم وساري،
 مَنھ مَني جَکرو، طاماعن تاري،
 پُڇي سي پارِي، جي عاجز آجورن ۾

Abro is the great support amongst all the others.

Because of the demands of the petitioners

Samma has even forgotten to take rest.

The honoured lord is the protector of all
 those who have hopes (in him).

He looks after those who are under his protection,
 and those who are helpless and destitute.³

Jam Tamachi, a Samma ruler, is another historical figure from Sind's past, commemorated by our poet for his true love for Nuri the fishermaid. He refers to various events associated with his rule. For example, the poet points out that, after marrying Nuri, Tamachi exempts all the fishermen from paying taxes, and proves

1. Shahvani, op. cit., pp.1285-6.

2. Ibid., pp.1286-7.

3. Shahvani, op. cit., pp.1286-7.

his generosity by helping them out in times of troubles. Shah Abd al-Latif also congratulates him for making a low caste fishergirl his queen, thus breaking the rigid rules of his society. He praises Jam Tamachi in the following words:

ڪاڇُ جَنِينِ جو ڪِڪِيُون، مالَ جَنِينِ جا مڏ،
 سَمِي سِيئي سِيئَ ڪِئا، هِيئَ جَنِينِ جا هڏ،
 ڄام! پَرَتِيءَ لَڏ، سانگينَ جي، سِيڏُ ڇي.

Their food is stinking fish, their only property
 are rafts

Samma has made as his in-laws those who are very
 weak (i.e. poor)

O Jam! says Sayyid, everything belonging to these
 countrymen (i.e. the fishermen) is under your
 protection.¹

Most scholars have attributed a Sufi interpretation to this, as to other stories in the work of Shah Abd al-Latif. It is argued that the theme of humility and sincerity and God's preference for those who are meek and submit to his will is reflected in this story of Jam Tamachi and Nuri. The king's choice of a poor girl as chief queen, rejecting the royal queens is an expression of God's disapproval of human vanity. Such an interpretation cannot be refuted. Nevertheless, it is also important to bear in mind that this particular story, as others in the *Risalo*, is remarkable for its local colour and significance.

With reference to cities mentioned by the two poets, Rumi speaks of a number of Islamic cities in his work. Apart from his homeland, Khurasan, he names Baghdad, Damascus, Istanbul, Bukhara, Samarqand, Mecca and many other cities. He describes each of them in respect of their religious significance.²

1. Shahvani, op. cit., p.859.

2. Schimmel, op. cit., pp.189-192.

References to cities like Mecca, Medina, and Kerbala¹ in the *Risalo* are to be expected since these are immediately associated with the Prophet Muhammad and Imam Husain. Otherwise, there are much fewer references to Islamic cities than in the work of Rumi. There are a few exceptional cases, such as the occasion when the poet speaks of lightning in the rainy season and prays for the well-being of the whole world. In that verse he mentions a number of countries and cities which are outside Sind, such as Istanbul, Samarqand, Rum, Kabul, Qandahar, Delhi, Deccan, China and others.² Generally speaking, however, his references to place names are mostly local. Towns and villages are named with a description of their importance and the type of crafts practised there.

ALLUSIONS TO SUFI HISTORY

Rumi refers to many well-known figures from the early history of Sufism, such as Junaid, Shaikh Bistami, Shaiq al-Balkhi, Hallaj and others. Rumi believes, however, that Shams al-Din was superior to all these Sufis, even including Hallaj and Bistami.³

There is some controversy over the exact Sufi allegiance of Shah Abd al-Latif. In any case, the only prominent Sufis mentioned by him are Hallaj and Rumi himself.

Rumi does not mention explicitly the name of Rabi'a although he refers to her story, attributing it to a Sufi who sat in the middle of a garden putting his head on his knees and contemplating God.⁴

1. Shahvani, op. cit., pp.921-48.

2. Ibid., p.980.

3. Schimmel, op. cit., pp.198-208.

4. Ibid., p.200.

According to this story Rabi'a was sitting inside her house when her maidservant called her and asked her to go out and admire the glory of spring. To this she answered that the gardens and fruit were within her heart.

There is no direct reference to Rabi'a in the work of Shah Abd al-Latif either, but it can be argued that he alludes indirectly to her in verses scattered in his *Risalo*, especially in *Sur Sasui Abri*, where he advises Sasui to look within herself for her beloved, saying:

جو تون ڏورئين ڏور، سدا آهي ساڻ تو،
 لالَن لَ لَطِيفُ چي، مَنجِي تِي مَعْدُورِ
 مَنجِيهَا پَن پَرُوڙ تو مَنجِي آهَس تَكِيو.

He for whom you are seeking far off is always
 with you.

For (you) sweetheart, says Lâtif,
 discern within yourself, O blind one,
 Draw the signs from within,
 because his resting place is within you.¹

Or in another place he says:

وَوَڙِيَم سَپ وَتَان، يَارَا ڪَارَن جَت جِي،
 وَالله يَڪُل شَيء مَحِيَط، اِي اَرِيَاڻِي اُهيَاڻ،
 سَپ مَر پَنهُو پاڻ، پيو ناهِ پَرُوڙ ري.

I have searched everywhere for the friend Jat.
 'Everything is surrounded by God'
 This is the sign of Aryani
 Punhu is in everything
 There is none other than Baloch.²

Reference has already been made in this chapter to *Sur Bilawal*³ and to the poet's stressing that the reward of Paradise is not of any importance. In the same *sur* there are a number of

1. Shahvani, op. cit., p.393.

2. Shahvani, op. cit., p.392.

3. Ibid., pp.1281-82.

other verses which convey a message similar to that of Rabi'a. The poet says:¹

ڪونه اُت ڪوهيانُ جِتِ تو، پوري! پائيو،
 پنڌُ مَ ڪَرِ پهاڙَ ڏي، وُجودِني وُٽڪارُ
 ڌارِنا پائجِ ڌانَ پُچُ پريان ڪَرِ پاڻُ تون.

Kohiyar² is not there, where you thought
 (he would be) O ignorant one!
 Do not walk towards the mountain,
 Your own being is the mountain
 Consider outside things as outsiders,
 Ask for the beloved from yourself.

Rumi speaks highly of Hallaj and defends him against the accusations that he was a heretic. According to him Hallaj was misunderstood, because by saying 'I am God' he was actually denying his own existence and affirming that only God has existence.⁴

Shah Abd al-Latif also believes that Hallaj was wrongly hanged. He therefore comments:

جَرِ تَرِ نَڪَ تَوَارَ وَڃِ نِڀِ وائي هيڪَري،
 سَپِيئي شَيِ تَڻا، سُوري سَزا وارَ
 هَمه منُصورَ هزارَ ڪَهڙا چارَهنو چارَهنين؟³

The current in the stream, the water, the land,
 and every tree is speaking of the same thing.

1. Ibid., p.391.
2. Reference to Punhu, resident of the mountain.
3. Schimmel, op. cit., p.205.
4. Shahvani, op. cit., p.350.

Thus all these things are destined for the gallows
and punishment.

All these in thousands, are all Mansur
Which of them is going to be hanged?

Yet another verse conveys this meaning:

سَيِّتِ پَچَارَ پَرِينِ جِي، سَيِّتِ هَوَتَ حُصُورُ
مُلُڪُ مَرُو مَنصُورُ ڪَهي ڪَهنڊِ ڪَيترا؟

Everything is speaking about the Beloved.
And the Beloved is present everywhere
The whole country (i.e. the world) is Mansur.
How much of it are you going to slaughter?¹

From both the above-mentioned verses, it is evident that our poet supports Hallaj ; every living and non-living creature shares oneness with God. Their claims are not therefore different from those of Hallaj.

Another probable reason for the support given by Shah Abd al-Latif to Mansur Hallaj is that in his youth he witnessed the execution on similar grounds of a Sufi, Shah Inayat of Jhoke (d. 1133 A.H.). This event is said to have left a lasting impression on Shah Abd al-Latif and evidently motivates and colours his description of Hallaj's death. Although there are no direct references to Shah Inayat's death, a number of verses in *Sur Ramkali* are said to have been composed by the poet in memory of Shah Inayat. This verse may have been said on that occasion:

اُچُ نہ اوطاقنِ مِ سَندي جو گنِ ذاتِ،
ساري سناينِ ڪي، رُٿِ ساري راتِ،
مُون تَن جَنِينِ جِي تاتِ، سي لاهوتي لَڏي وِٺا.

1. Shahvani, op. cit., p.351.

The yogis are no more in the *Otaq* today
 While longing for the Sannyasis I have wept all
 night
 About whom have I been thinking? Those *Lahutis*
 have gone away.

There are several verses in the *Risalo*, especially in *Sur Kalyan* and *Yaman Kalyan*, where gallows, daggers, poison and other methods of killing are mentioned by the poet. The true lover, however, according to our poet, does not only welcome death but rejoices in it, because it is the prerequisite of love:

سڪڻ ۽ سُورِي ٻئي اَڪَر هيڪَڙِي،
 وَهڻُ وَائِڙِيَن تِي، ڪَارڻُ صُرُورِي،
 ٻِنُهِن جِي پُورِي، جِي ڏني رِي نه ٿِي.

Longing and gallows are both the same word²
 The necessary condition for both is to sit and wait
 on the wayside
 Both are satisfied by nothing less than giving up
 life.³

Shah Abd al-Latif and Rumi both share therefore a similar attitude towards Hallaj. Rumi goes further, however. In spite of all his admiration for Hallaj, whom he compares to Shams al-Din, Rumi nevertheless comments that Hallaj was less than an ant, because he did not recognise Shams.⁴ Moreover, he says that Shams was superior to Hallaj because he reached the rank of the beloved, whereas Hallaj still remained a lover.

1. Shahvani, op. cit., p.1160.

Cf. Wafai Din Muhammad, *Latfal-Latif*, Karachi, 1951, p.72.

2 In Sindhi the words for longing and gallows both start with an S.

3. Shahvani, op. cit., p.143.

4. Schimmel, op. cit., p.209.

IMAGES OF MUSIC AND DANCE

Rumi is very fond of music and dance, in spite of the objections to them by orthodox religious groups. Music and songs are persistent images in his work.¹

Shah Abd al-Latif, as has already been mentioned, is also an ardent lover of music regardless of criticism by religious people.

For Rumi, Shams al-Din may be called the inspiring figure, whose love leads him to a love of poetry, music and dance. He sings in praise of Shams al-Din when they are together and sings in separation from his beloved.

The love and torments of pain which Shah Abd al-Latif experiences because of separation from his lady love Sa'ida Begum takes the form of poetry. This *ishq majazi* is said to have been the source of inspiration for his poetry, and his love of music. After his return from journeying with yogis he sings his verses in lamentation at the separation. His sorrows in separation can be said to have burst out in cries of pain through his poetry, which are in the form of *bait*, *dohira*, *vayun* and *kafiyun* which he sings to a musical accompaniment with his followers.

After spending three years with yogis and returning home, Shah Abd al-Latif begins to sing in heart-rending verses, recalling their company:

مُون سِي دَنَا مَا ۛ جَنِين دَنُو پَرِي ڪِي،
 رَهِي اُچِي رَاتَرِي، تَن جُنُگَن سِنْدِي ڄاءِ،
 تَنين ڄِي ساڃاءِ تَرُهِي تَنِي تَارِ ۛ

O mother! I have seen those, who saw the Beloved.
 One should spend a night in the company of those
 courages ones.

Their knowledge (guidance) will serve like a raft
in the deep waters.

Here the poet longs for the yogis because they know certain divine secrets and have seen the Beloved. He continues in a similar vein:

وَاجِبَتْ وَيَرَاكِبِينَ جَا، مُونَ وَتِ وَدَّوْمَالُ،
مَقَالَا مَهْدِ تَنَا، كُونَهِي وَتِنَ قَالَ،
حَاصِلُ جَنِينِ حَالُ، أَتُونَنَ جِينَدِي أَنْ رِي.

The sounds of the music of *vairagis* are great
wealth for me
Their attributes are beyond speech,
there cannot be any argument about it.
Those who have attained the state of intoxication,
I cannot live without them.²

In the work of Rumi there are references to several musical instruments: the reed flute, rebeck, clarion, drums, trumpet, tamborine, *changor* small harp, *tambura*, *barbat*, *musiqar* and others.³

The image of the reed-flute in his work is of great significance. In the words of Schimmel:

the most famous expression of this love of music
is the eighteen introductory verses of the
Mathnavi, commonly known as *she'r-e-ney*.⁴

Rumi expresses his feelings of pain and suffering in separation from Shams al-Din, complaining like a reed-flute which is

1. Shahvani, op. cit., p.1054.

2. Ibid., pp.1105-6.

3. Schimmel, op. cit., pp.212-14.

4. Schimmel, op. cit., p.210.

separated from its origin, and longing to go back to its source.

In some of his verses Shah Abd al-Latif uses the same symbol of the reed flute, crying in separation from its beloved. Shah Abd al-Latif adjusts the image in his work, making Sasui cry like a reed, longing for Punhu. The verse given below seems to echo Rumi's verses about the flute:

وَدِيلِ تِي وَايُونِ كَرِي، كُنَلِ كُوْكَارِي،
هَنْ پَنَ پَنَهْجَا سَارَنَّا، هِي هَنْجُونِ هَدَنِ لَ هَارِي.

The separated (lit: cut off) one speaks
The slaughtered one complains
That (reed) longs for its origin
This one (Sasui) sheds tears for her beloved.²

Elsewhere the poet expresses a similar idea in terms of the imagery of another musical instrument, namely the *Sarangi*:

رُجِينِ مِرَرْتِي، كَرِ سَارَنِگِي سَانُ
اِي عِشَقِ جَوِ آوَانُ مَاژْهُو رَكْنِ مُنَدِ تِي.

There is a cry in the wilderness,
like the tune of *sarangi*,
It is the call of love,
people have attributed it to the woman.³

With reference to Rumi's influence on Shah Abd al-Latif, Schimmel has pointed out this image of the reed flute in the work of our poet. She has rightly commented that the cry of the reed flute for both poets represents the soul's longing for its heavenly

1. op. cit., p.211.

2. Shahvani, op. cit., pp.485-6.

3. Ibid., p.492.

home and divine beloved.¹

With reference to the *chang* (little harp), Rumi likens its sound to lamentation lovingly played at the command of the Beloved.²

The *chang* and its magical powers are mentioned in *Sur Sorath*. In this *sur* the musician Bijal represents the spiritual master and Rai Diyach is a *raja*, a true seeker, who is generous and fair in his dealings. This harp has such power that it elicits life from the body of all those who hear it:³

جَاجِکُ جُھوناگَرِہمِ مِ کو عَطائی آيو،
 تِہمِ کَامِلَ کَدِي کِینَرُو ويہي وَجايو،
 شَہرُ سَجَوِي سُرِ سِين، تَنَدُنِ تَہايو،
 دَايُونِ دَرِمَانْدِيُونِ تِيُون، ہَايُنِ ہَاڏايو،
 چَارِکُ تِي چايو، تہ ماري آهي مَکُو.

Jajik, a talented musician came to Jhunagarh,
 That perfect one took off his harp and started
 playing.

The tune from the strings set the whole city on
 fire.

The maids in the house became restless and the
 queen's pleaded.

The musician made his harp say
 that the minstrel is the killer.

The harp played by Bijal has such an enchanting influence on Raja Rai Diyach that he calls the minstrel to his palace and offers him all his wealth, horses and elephants. Bijal, however,

1. Schimmel, A.M., *Pain and Grace*, Leiden, 1976, pp.165-66.

2. Schimmel, op. cit., p.216.

3. Shahvani, op. cit., pp.892-93.

rejects everything and continues playing.

Shah Abd al-Latif describes how the spell of the harp makes the Raja agree to Bijal's every wish:

ڪي جو پيڄل ٻولڻو، ڀني ويهي ڀان،
 راجا رٽولن ۾ سڀاڻو سلطان،
 آءُ مٿاهون، مڱڻا! مقابل ميدان،
 گهوريان لڪ، لطيف چي، تنهجي قدمن تان قربان،
 مٿو هي، مزمان! هلي آءُ ته هٿ ڏين.

What the minstrel Bijal sang at dawn!
 The Raja was in his palace, this (music) soothed
 the Sultan.

'Come forward minstrel, without hesitation
 I will present hundreds of thousands'
 Says Latif, 'may I sacrifice myself at your feet
 O guest! come here, and I will present you my
 head.'

It seems that Shah Abd al-Latif uses the image of Bijal to represent the Perfect Man. His music makes the Raja, the *salik*, aware of his separation from his primordial home. Moreover, it makes him restless and his soul feels trapped in the cage of his body, which becomes impatient and restless, eager to return to its eternal home. Thus he pleads with the minstrel to free him from this cage:

وڌي سڙ، تي سَرهو، مَرڪي آءُ مَرگا،
 جاجڪ! تو مٿا، ملڪ مَرُوئي گهوريان.

Cut my neck, and be cheerful, do not come and
sing more

O Jajik, let me sacrifice the whole country to
you.¹

After offering the minstrel his head, the Raja seems to think again and realises that what he has offered is nothing in comparison to the music of the harp. So he regrets what he has said:

سَوِ سِرِنِ پائي، جي تَنَدُ بَرَابَرِ توريان،
اُتَلِ اوڏاهمِ ٿي، جيڏاهمِ پيڄلُ بَرائي،
سَڪُونُ هُڏَ آهي، سِرَ ۾ سَڃُنُ ناهِ ڪي.

When I put a hundred heads on one side of the
scale

And a single string on the other side

It will be overweighted on the side where Bijal
has played.

This is a mere bone (i.e. head): it has no value.²

Then Shah Abd al-Latif sums up the sacrifice and benevolence of the Raja, saying that it has no limits.

Thus, when the minstrel cuts the Raja's head off, the poet becomes aware of how all seemingly different things can become one. He says:

ٿيئي پَرچَنا پاڻ ۾ تَنَدُ، ڪَتارو ڪَنَدُ،
تِهَ جهُوئي ناهِ ڪي، جو تو، چارَن! ڪَئو پَنَدُ،
اِي شُڪرُ اَلْحَمْدُ، جن مَٿو گُهرِ يو، مَکَنا!

1. Shahvani, op. cit., p.910.

2. Shahvani, op. cit., p.903.

Three things met, the string, dagger and neck all
 become one
 O Charan! none can equal you
 because you came all the way
 Thank God that you minstrel only asked
 for a head.¹

Rumi calls *sama'* 'the nourishment of the soul'.² *Sama'* is considered the chief characteristic of the Mevlevi order. Rumi himself used to take part in *samā'*, either in his own home or at his friends' houses where regular meetings were held. It is said that once Rumi danced with Salah al-Din Zarkub embracing him. Later, this dance was institutionalised in the Mevlevi order.³ Although it is agreed by scholars who have written about Shah Abd al-Latif that he was fond of music and *sama'*, in his poetry there appears to be no clear reference to *sama'*.

GARDENS

Let us turn now to the treatment of the image of the garden in the poetry of Rumi. Like many of his predecessors he compared the worldly garden with that of heaven.⁴ Living as he did in Konya, he was no doubt more directly inspired by the beautiful gardens he saw in that city, the sweet smell of which made the whole atmosphere fragrant.

In the work of Shah Abd al-Latif, there are not many references to gardens, such as one would find in cities like Konya, because unlike Rumi our poet came from a rural background. A rare example of the image of a garden is found in *Sur Mumal*

1. Ibid., p.910.

2. Schimmel, op. cit., p.217.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid., pp.82-83.

Rano, where a garden in Kak¹ is mentioned thus:

اَکُون، دَاکُون، سِرْکَنْدِ شَاخُون، چِت چوکا چَندَن کَوَنَرِ
 مَیِ سِیْیِ مَایَا، چِت نَم پَرَن پَوَنَرِ
 کُنْثَارِیُون ۽ کَوَنَرِ کَاهِ تَه پَسُون کَاکِ جا.

Where there are walnuts, grapes, branches of
 sandalwood, and pleasant lotus flowers and
 sandalwood.

The camel has reached that place, where not even
 the black bee can hover around.

Proceed, so as to attain the maidens and the lotus
 flower.²

More often, Shah Abd al-Latif praises the beauty of nature
 in general and not gardens in particular. One finds romantic lines
 where our poet portrays an exquisite countryside in spring. In *Sur
 Kamod*, for example, he describes a scene on the Kinjhar lake in
 the following lines:

هَيْبِ جَرُ مَتِي مَجِرُ کَنْدِي کَوَنَرِ تَرَن،
 وَرَنِي وَهُونَدَن، کِنْجَهَرُ کَتَوَرِي تِي.

Below, the clear water is flowing, above is a
 cluster of greenery.

On the bank the lotus flowers are floating.

On the arrival of spring, the Kinjhar is full of
 musk fragrance.³

In the case of Rumi the colour, shape and position of each
 flower is interpreted as having religious or romantic significance.

1. The home town of Mumal, who was the heroine of one of the folk-stories.

2. Shahvani, op. cit., pp.713-14.

3. Shahvani, op. cit., p.867.

For example, the rose stands for absolute perfection, and alludes to the Qur'anic rose-garden, with reference to Abraham, who was thrown in a fire, which turned out to be not a fire but a rose-garden. The violet, in Rumi's work, symbolises an ascetic who sits meditating, whereas the waterlily, which appears to be restless on the foam, symbolises the lover. In this way Rumi associates flowers and fruits with certain aspects of human life.¹

In contrast to the work of Rumi, there are not many specific references to flowers in the *Risalo*. This difference no doubt results from the different environments of the two poets. The flowers mentioned by Rumi, with a few exceptions, are not found in the *Risalo*, and the flowers and blossom of wild plants mentioned by Shah Abd al-Latif are those found in the countryside of Sind and commonly used as food for the rural poor.

Generally, Shah Abd al-Latif does not speak of flowers. A rare example is the following:

ڪُونَرِ پاڙُونِ پاڻِ تارِ ۾ پُونَرِ پَرِي آڪاسِ ،
 ٻِنِهِيَن سَنَدِي ڳالڙِي، رازِڪَ اَنَدِي راسِ ،
 تِهه عَشَقَ ڪِي شَاباسِ، جِهه مَحَبَّتِي مِيزِيا.

The roots of the lotus flower are in the earth
 and the black bee flies in the sky
 The Nourisher provides for the needs of both.
 Thanks to the love, which has brought the lovers
 together.²

In the above verse, it is evident that the poet is referring to the secrets of God, who can bring two unlike objects together in love. The lotus and the bee are not only of different species, but also one is associated with water and the earth whilst the other's

1. Schimmel, op. cit., pp.88-92.

2. Shahvani, op. cit., p.1215.

abode is high in the air and sky. Because God wants them to meet, He provides them with the opportunity. Thus, two opposite things are united through a common bond, which is love.

Far more typical than the above verse are the following lines in which Shah Abd al-Latif makes Marui say:

عُمَرَا اُنْهَيْن دِيَهَ جَا، دَوْتِيَن دَنِمَر دَس،
 وَلِيُون، وَنَ قَلَارِيَا، لَلُرُ نَلِيُو لَس،
 آتُو وَجَهَن آهَرِيَن سِنْدَا تُوَهَن نَس،
 مِيُوَا، مَجَنَ مَالِيُون، سَبَ كَايَلَن جَس،
 مَاژِي وَهِي مَس، مَلِيرَ وَيَنْدِي مَاژِي.

Umar! the countrymen have told me of (my) home
 that the creepers and the trees have blossomed,
 that lots of *luler*¹ have grown there.

They are bringing baskets full of bitter gourds
 and collecting them in the barns.

They are savouring all the fruits, *manur*² and
 honey,

I can hardly stay in the fort,
 Marui will go to Malir.³

QURANIC IMAGERY

In Rumi's works, whether the *Masnawi* or the *Diwan*, one finds numerous words, phrases, and sentences from the Qur'an, either quoted in the actual Arabic or translated into Persian. Rumi was well versed in Arabic, so he did not find it difficult to fit Qur'anic verses or Prophetic traditions into his own work. Some-

1. A vegetable which grows wild and is eaten.
2. Pods of the Kando tree.
3. Shahvani, op. cit., p.807.

times he uses them for religious purposes. At other times these verses are inserted into his romantic poetry.¹

In her chapter on the Islamic background of Shah Abd al-Latif, Schimmel discusses the Qur'anic references in his poetry in some detail.² Another scholar, Mirza Qalech Beg, had earlier examined this aspect of the work of Shah Abd al-Latif, giving examples from the Qur'an and the *Risalo*.³

It would therefore be superfluous to go into details here. A few prominent examples of parallel and contrasting references to the Qur'an in the imagery of Rumi and Shah Abd al-Latif will therefore suffice.

Like Rumi, Shah Abd al-Latif uses certain words, phrases and sentences from the Qur'an and *hadis*, thus following the tradition of his predecessors. Some words and phrases recur more often than others in his work; for example:

'Be' and it 'Became' (3/47)
 'Am I not your Lord' (7/172)
 'Yes you are' is the soul's answer.⁴

Shah Abd al-Latif makes Marui repeat this over and over again to remind Umar that her love for her people and Khetsin is eternal, so it is useless for him to try to change her opinion.

أَلَسْتُ بِرَبِّكُمْ، جَلَّهَ كَنْ يَوْمِ
 قَالُوا بَلَىٰ قَلْبَ سَيْنٍ، تَلَّهَ تَتَّ جِيَوْمِ
 تَهِينِ وَيَرَ كَنْوَمِ وَجَنِّ وَيَرِيحِنِ سَيْنِ.

1. Schimmel, op. cit., pp.173-74.
2. Schimmel, A.M., *Pain and Grace*, Leiden, 1976, pp.236,262.
3. Mirza Qalech Beg, *Ahwal Shah Abd al-Latif*, Hyderabad Sind, 1972, pp.94-113.
4. Shahvani, op. cit., pp.767-69.

When I heard,
 'Am I not your Lord', they said:
 'Yes you are', I said there and then
 with my heart. ¹
 At that moment I made a promise (of love)
 to my countrymen.²

Elsewhere Marui says:

نڪا "ڪن فيڪون" هئي، نڪا مورت ماڻه،
 نڪا سد ثواب جي، نڪو غرض گناهه،
 هڪائي هڪ هئي، وحدانيت واهه،
 لڪيائين، لطيف چي، اُت ججهاندَر ڳاهه،
 اکين ۽ ارواح، اها ساڃاءِ سپرين.

(God) did not say 'Be' nor had (the world) come
 into existence,
 Nor was there the face of the moon.
 There was no knowledge of reward yet,
 nor was there any concept of sin.
 Everything was in a state of Unity,
 all in One,
 At that moment, says Latif, (she) understood
 the secret (of love)
 O beloved! my eyes and soul have
 (only) that perception.²

There are a number of sentences and *suras* from the Qur'an
 and the tradition to be found in Shah Abd al-Latif's work; for
 example:

1. Ibid., p.767.
2. Shahvani, op. cit., p.769.
3. Ibid., p.770. *Sura* 16/50.

- Q LI: 21. ۱- وَفِي أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَفَلَا تَبْصُرُونَ.
 Q LIII: 9 ۲- فَكَانَ قَابَ قَوْسَيْنِ أَوْ أَدْنَى.
 Sufi *hadis* ۳- لَا مَقْصُودَ فِي الدَّارَيْنِ.
 Sufi *hadis* ۴- خَلَقَ آدَمَ عَلَى صُورَتِهِ.

Rumi 'compares the perfectly beautiful face of the beloved to a masterfully calligraphed copy of the Qur'an'. Then he goes on to describe and compare the flawless beauty of the friend, which reveals the creative beauty and power of God, as the Qur'an reveals the power and wisdom of God.⁴

Shah Abd al-Latif does not compare the beauty of the friend to the Qur'an but likens the face of the beloved to the niche of the mosque.

مُهْ مِجْرَابُ پَرِي جُو، جَامِعُ سَيِّ جِهَانُ،
 اُذَامِي اُتِ وَيُو، عَقْلُ ۽ عِرْفَانُ،
 سَيَوِي سُبْحَانُ، كَاذِي وَجِي نَيْتِيَانُ.

The face of the beloved is the niche (in the mosque)
 The whole world is the mosque
 All intelligence and knowledge disappear there.
 Everywhere is God. Where shall I go and start
 my prayer.⁵

Schimmel has pointed out that Rumi, like other Sufi poets, refers to the semi-legendary personalities mentioned in the Qur'an.

1. Shahvani, op.cit., p.409.
2. Ibid., p.1135.
3. Ibid., pp.136,407.
4. Schimmel, op. cit., p.175.
5. Shahvani, op. cit., p.1138.

He either narrates stories about them or makes some references to them, such as Noah's ark, David's making of iron coats, king Solomon and the genies and Bilquis the queen of Sheba, Abraham, Moses, Jesus, the Prophet Muhammad and others.¹

Following the tradition of his predecessors, Shah Abd al-Latif does refer to these prophets, but not as frequently as Rumi. Moreover his references to them are short, or take the form of brief quotes at times from the Qur'an or *hadis*. For instance, he draws a contrast between Moses and Iblis, Khalil and Azar:²

مُهْ تَهْ مُوسَى جَهَرَوُ عَادَتَ مِ اِبْلِيسُ،
اِهَرَوُ خَا مُرْ خَبِيثُ، كِيدِي كُوهُ نَهْ چَدِينِ؟

In appearance (your face) is like Moses,
but your habits are like Iblis
Why don't you get rid of such wicked or impure
a character?

Shah Abd al-Latif also makes an allusion to Abraham Khalil, and to his father Azar, again showing a contrast between a believer and non-believer.

وائي .

مُهْ مَنجِهْ خَلِيلُ، اَنَدَرِ آذَرُ آهِيْنِ.
سَدَّ مَرْ كَرِ صَحَّتْ جِي، اَيَا تُونِ عَلِيلُ،
اَنَدَرِ آذَرُ آهِيْنِ.

1. Schimmel, op. cit., pp.176–82.

2. Shahvani, op. cit., p.1016.

3. Shahvani, op. cit., pp.1009–10.

نالو ناهه نفاق جو، جتي رَبُّ جَلِيلُ،
 أَنْدَرِ آذرُ آهِيينَ.
 مُمُّ مَ مُسْلِمَانُ تُون، قَلْبُ تان قَلِيلُ،
 أَنْدَرِ آذرُ آهِيينَ.
 وَالِي جِي وَصَالُ مِ دُئي ناهه دَلِيلُ،
 أَنْدَرِ آذرُ آهِيينَ.
 اِلا! عَبْدُاللطيفُ جِي، سَچو رِڪائجُ سِيلُ،
 أَنْدَرِ آذرُ آهِيينَ.

In appearance you are Khalil,¹ whereas,
 (You are) Azar² within.
 Do not wish for health, because you are still ill,
 (You are) Azar within.
 There is no doubt about the
 greatness of God.
 In appearance you are Muslim,
 but your heart is small
 (narrow-minded and impure)
 There is no doubt or argument required for the union
 with the Master,
 (You are) Azar within.
 'O God!' says Abd al-Latif, 'help me to be sincere'
 (You are) Azar within.

It is noteworthy that Shah Abd al-Latif combines the Qur'anic allegories with his own local references. For example in the Vai given below there are five quotations from the Qur'an, including one on the Prophet Muhammad's ascension to heaven and nearness to God. The other alludes to Moses, who could not stand the light of God and fainted. Shah Abd al-Latif uses these quotations to describe the Sannyasis and Adesis, in order to attribute divine qualities to them.

1. I.e. Abraham, whose title was Khalil, i.e. the friend of God.
2. I.e. Abraham's father, who used to make idols, which were smashed by his son.

مونا طُورِ سينا سندا سناسين،
 سجدھ ۾ سيد چي، گوڏا گوڏرين،
 ”فَكَانَ قَابَ قَوْسَيْنِ أَوْ أَدْنَىٰ“، تا نانگا اينءِ نمَن،
 ”كُلُّ مَنْ عَلَيْهَا فَان“، باقي ڪين بچن،
 ”اللَّهُ وَلِيُّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا يُخْرِجُهُم مِّنَ الظُّلُمَاتِ إِلَى النُّورِ“،
 تا اهرتي پر پرن،
 ”خَرَّ مُوسَىٰ صَعِقًا“، جوڳي جنگ جَلَن،
 ”مَا زَاغَ الْبَصَرُ وَمَا طَغَىٰ“، اهرتي روشِ رَوَن،
 مشاهدو محبوب جو اُتي آديسن،
 ري پسن ري ستن، ري وصال وهن،
 ري پرن، ري بولن، تا اهرتي چال چلن،
 سيد چي سندين، تون ڪل پجين ٿو ڪهري!

The knees of the Sannyasis are like Mount Sinai,
 The Gaudiyya are in prostration, says Sayyid—
 ‘And he was at a distance of but two bow-lengths, or
 even nearer.’¹

The Nangas bend this way.
 All that is on earth will perish.²

Nothing will last.

God is the protector of those who have faith.

From the depths of darkness. He will lead them
 forth into light.³

They are following that tradition.

And Moses fell down,⁴

The brave yogis burn in it.

1. Q.LIII.9.

2. Q.LV.26.

3. Q.II.257.

4. Q.VII.143.

'(His) sight never swerved, nor did it go
 wrong' (Q.LIII.17) they follow that path.
 There the Adesi perceive the beloved.
 Without perception, without hearing, without
 attaining they sit there.
 Without walking, without speaking, they follow
 that path.
 Why do you ask about their condition!
 says Sayyid.¹

DIVINE CALLIGRAPHY

Rumi uses the letters of the alphabet as images representing human characteristics. He compares these letters with human physical characteristics. For instance, *alif* symbolises the slender figure of the beloved. The same letter *alif* also stands for God, His Divine Unity, sincerity, and uprightness, which are beyond qualification, and finally His Divine Essence. Rumi describes *alif* in various ways, and then deals with all the other letters attributing to each certain characteristics depending on its form and shape.²

Shah Abd al-Latif also uses this imagery but he employs fewer letters for that purpose. Like Rumi, he seems to be particularly fond of the letter *alif*, using it in various ways and ascribing to it a number of characteristics. For example here he uses it to explain the meaning of a certain *hadis*:

سا سِت ساریائون، اَلِف جِه جی اَک م
 لَا مَقْصُود فِی الدَّارِینِ، اِنْ پَر اُتائون،
 سَبْکُ سَوْنائون، اِثْنَا رَسِیْلَا رَحْمَان سِین.

They recollected that line, which has *alif* at its beginning.

1. Shahvani, op. cit., pp.1135-37.
2. Schimmel, op. cit., pp.163-64.

'I don't want anyone but you in this life and hereafter', this is what they say.
They chose the narrow path, and became happy with the Benevolent.

This verse refers to a Sufi *hadis*, which explains the inseparability of God and man, and the first promise of man to God.

Elsewhere, Shah Abd al-Latif refers to a number of the characteristics of *alif*. First of all, *alif* stands for God (Allah), Divine Unity and the key to all knowledge. He suggests:

اَكْرُ بِرَّهْمُ اَلِفَ جُو، وَرَقَّ سَبِّ وَسَارِ
اَنْدَرُ تُونِ اَجَارِ پَنَا پَرِهَنْدِه كِيتَرَا.

Read the letter *alif* and forget the rest of the pages.

Purify yourself. How many pages are you going to read?¹

In the above verse the poet suggests the manifold qualities of the letter *alif*. Because it is straight and perpendicular, it is said to symbolise sincerity and uprightness. Being so important it is regarded as the source of knowledge, so that after acquiring *alif* one may ignore the rest of the letters. He says:

هَلَايَجِ هِيَيْنِ مِ اَلِفَ سَنِيْدِي اَوَرِ
تِه كِتَابِنِ جِي كَوَرِ مَنجَهَانِي مَجْلُوْمِ تِي.

Draw the line of *alif* in your heart,
and you will attain (the knowledge) of thousands of books from within.²

1. Shahvani, op. cit., p.136.

2. Shahvani, op. cit., p.129.

3. Ibid., p.131.

Shah Abd al-Latif, like Rumi, remarks on the difference between Ahmad and Ahad, that is between the Prophet Muhammad and God on the basis of the *hadis qudsi*:

أَحَدٌ، أَحْمَدُ پَانِ مِ وَچَانِ مِیَمَ فَرَقُ،
آهِي مُسْتَعْرِقُ، عَالَمُ إِنْهِيءِ گَالِ مِ.

The difference between Ahad and Ahmad is just
mem,
The world is immersed in that thought.²

Shah Abd al-Latif also uses the image of the letter *lam* in relation to *alif*, illustrating the relationship of lover and beloved by reference to the combination of these two letters.

كَاتِبَ لِكَيْنِ چَنءِ لَا یَوِ لَا مِ أَلِفَ سِینِ،
أَسَانِ سَچُنُ تِنِءِ رَهْیَوِ آهِي رُوحِ مِ.

In the same way the calligrapher writes
putting *lam* attached to *alif*,
So too my beloved lives in my heart.

Rumi and shah Abd al-Latif both refer to the divine tablet, on which the calligrapher, who is God himself, inscribes the destinies of human beings. Rumi also mentions that the name of Shams al-Din has been inscribed in the book of love from pre-eternity.³ In a similar way Shah Abd al-Latif also refers to this tablet with reference to his heroines, in particular Suhni, Marui and Sasui. He attributes their suffering to its having been pre-destined by virtue of being inscribed on the divine tablet. For example, Marui is heard complaining:

1. Shahvani, *op. cit.*, p.132.

2. *Ibid.*, p.130.

3. Schimmel, *op. cit.*, p.169.

قَسَمَتَ قَيْدُ قَوِيٍّ، نَاتَ كِيرَ آچِي هِنَ ڪوٽَ ۾؟
 آڻِي لَکَڻِي لَوْحَ جِي، هِنْدُ ڏيکارِي مُهِي،
 پَرَجِي ڪِينَ پَهَنُوارِي، جَانِ، جُسُو ۽ جِي،
 راجا! راضي ٿِي، تَهَ مارُنِ مِلِي مارُئي.

My destiny has imprisoned me,
 otherwise who will come to this fort?
 That which was written on 'the tablet'
 has led me to this place
 Without the shepherd, my life, body
 and heart cannot lie at rest
 O master, give your approval, that
 Marui may see her Maru.¹

WEAVING AND SEWING

The symbolism of weaving is very old in the history of various religious systems, and has been used in poetry throughout the ages in different parts of the world. Rumi uses this imagery in various contexts and in different ways to express Sufi concepts.² Nor is Shah Abd al-Latif an exception to the poetic tradition in his use of the image of weaving and spinning.

Rumi sometimes speaks of the lover, who weaves satin and brocade out of his own blood to lay beneath the beloved's feet. Elsewhere he refers to the green velvet and silk dress promised to the faithful in paradise, but contrasts it with the dress of love which is more valuable. Indeed, Rumi mentions a number of expensive woven materials such as satin, embroidered silk and others.³ All examples given are of high quality material which only the rich upper-class society could afford to wear. Rumi's choice of image in this respect is dictated by the urban society in which he lived.

1. Shahvani, op. cit., p.770.

2. Schimmel, op. cit., p.157.

3. Ibid., pp.157-160.

Shah Abd al-Latif does not speak of any of the expensive cloth mentioned by Rumi. In *Sur Kapa'iti*, references are made to the spinning of yarn and coarse cotton. The 'finest' cloth mentioned by him in this respect is fine muslin.¹

While referring to the yarn woven by women spinners, he comments:

سُتُ اَنِينَ جو سَقَرُ جي پَر ۾ پِچائين،
 آوازُ اَرَتَ جو، ساھ نہ سُڪائين،
 لڪايو، لَطِيفُ چي، ڪنڀو ڪٽائين،
 جي ماڻڪَ موٽائين، تَبِ مُلُ مَھانگو اُنَ جو.

Those who spin secretly, their yarn
 has great value
 They do not let themselves even hear
 the sound of the spinning wheel.
 Latif says, they spin secretly and tremble.
 Even when they reject precious stones,
 their (yarn) is more valuable than it.²

In the opinion of Shah Abd al-Latif, yarn spun devotedly and sincerely becomes more valuable than precious stones. On another occasion he comments on coarse material:

مَحَبَّتَ پاڻي مَن ۾ رَيدا روڙيا جَن،
 تَنَ جو صَرافَن، اَنَ توريو ئي اَگھائيو.

Those who have spun coarse material out of love,
 the merchants accepted theirs without
 measurement.³

1. Shahvani, op. cit., p.1187.

2. Shahvani, op. cit., pp.1186-1187.

3. Shahvani, op. cit., p.1186.

In this verse again, love is emphasised, not the material. Even if the thread or cloth produced is coarse, it will be accepted, provided the seeker or spinner works on it with love.

Sur Kapa'iti is full of advice to spinners and weaverwomen, who are asked to do their job sincerely, with devotion and humility, so as to achieve better results.¹ The poet repeatedly stresses the importance of deeds and actions, pointing out that without action and hard work nothing can be achieved. For example, the poet chastises the spinner thus:-

ڪَتَنَ جِي ڪَانَ ڪَرِين، سَتِي سَاهِين هَڏُ
 صُيَحَ اِيَنڌَ اَوِجَتِي، عِيَدَ اُگهاڙَن ڪَڏُ
 جَتِ سَرَتِيُون ڪَندَ سَڏُ، اُتِ سڪندي سِنڱار ڪي.

You are not spinning, but you are sleeping,
 laying aside all thoughts of danger.

In the morning at the arrival of the Id,

You will be among the naked.

When you are called by friends,

You will be yearning for adornment.²

This verse has two levels of meaning. On the one hand, the *salik* is warned of the brevity of life, that he is wasting time, that the Day of Judgement will come soon, and that he will regret his heedlessness. At the same time it is possible to interpret this poem as referring to daily rural life as the poet must have known it. He must have come across the women spinners, some of whom were inattentive. He therefore chooses this particular image, knowing it to be familiar to his audience, to warn them of the importance of being attentive in daily affairs, in order to achieve their goal.

In *Sur Kapa'iti*, the poet speaks of a merchant who buys yarn from these women. He warns that the merchant will reject the

1. Ibid., pp.1181-90.

2. Shahvani, op. cit., pp.1182-83.

yarn if it is not of good quality but has faults because it has not been woven with love and devotion.¹

Here the reference to a merchant may imply a *murshid* or God, who does not like carelessness.

In Rumi's work, a tailor is the term used to represent God, man being represented as a piece of silk cloth. It is the tailor who decides the cloth's fate just as it is God who decides whether or not to convert the infidel into a pious man.² In other words, in Rumi's system of thought, man has little choice but to do what God destines for him.

Shah Abd al-Latif also refers in his work to the omnipotence and will of God in shaping men's destiny, but there is also evidence of man's responsibility for his own spiritual progress, symbolised by the spinner's choice to heed the poet's advice to be vigilant and hard working. If they produce good fine muslin then they will be rewarded by the merchant. The poet says:

تنبائي تاڪيد سين، جنين پڇايو پا،
 لسي تند، لطيف چي، هلي تن هئا،
 مل مل منجها ما! جي سڪيون تن سون ڪن.

Those who have cleaned the cotton carefully
 and spun even half a pound,
 Keeping the thread smooth throughout,
 says Latif,
 O mother! Those who weave muslin
 will obtain the golden reward.³

1. Shahvani, op. cit., p.1182.

2. Schimmel, op. cit., p.161.

3. Shahvani, op. cit., p.1187.

PASTIMES AND THE GREAT

Rumi like many other Persian poets follows the tradition of his predecessors, drawing on images from the games which were played among royalty and high and middle-class society. He uses images from different games such as chess, nard, backgammon, polo, as symbols with a mystical interpretation. It is interesting to note, however, that these games were associated with high-class society.¹

Using the terminology associated with each game Rumi describes the hopelessness of the situation in which most players find themselves during the game. The position of these players symbolises the hopelessness of most human beings in their spiritual progress.

In the work of Shah Abd al-Latif one does not find imagery relating to games intended for royalty and upper-class people. Although some games like chess and backgammon were known to people in Sind, as these games were associated with city life and its leisures, it is not surprising that the poet of rural Sind does not mention them in his work.

This suggests something in the poet's personality which is less interested in the pursuits of the rich and more concerned with the dire struggle for existence on the part of the poor:

پاڙي ناھ پُروڙ تہ ڪا رات رنجائي گُذري،
 ٻانڀڻ پُروچن جي، گھائي وڌي گھوڙ
 هڪ سسئي ٻٽا سُور وٽا پٽيندا. پاڻ م.

The neighbours are unaware,
 that someone has spent the night in distress.

1. Schimmel, op. cit., pp.69-70.

Babhan¹ has been wounded by the stare of Baloch.²
 One of them was Sasui, the other was sorrow,
 both of them were beating (their breasts) in
 grief.³

Here the poet suggests that matters have come to such a pass that even neighbours who once cared for one another, have given up looking after each other's wellbeing.

Shah Abd al-Latif must have seen for himself the nomadic tribe called Oad in Sind who build other people's houses but have no place in which they themselves may settle down. Nor were they ever certain at any time of earning their livelihood. He comments on their condition in the following lines:⁴

چَنَلِ چَجَ هَتَنِ ۾ ڪَلهن ڪوڏارا،
 پورهئي خاطرِ پاهجي، اُتن سوارا،
 اوڏ به ويچارا، لاڪا! وَجَن لڏنو.

They have tattered winnow baskets in their hands
 and carry spades on their shoulders.
 For the sake of labour, they wake up early in
 the morning.
 Lakha!⁵ the poor Oad are migrating away.

Rumi, on the other hand, appears to dislike villagers, although he sympathises with them. This attitude is in marked contrast to the caring and sympathetic treatment of the rural poor in the work of Shah Abd al-Latif.

1. I.e. to Sasui, who belonged to the Hindu Babhan or Brahman class, but was adopted by a potter.

2. I.e. Punhu.

3. Shahvani, op. cit., p.634.

4. Shahvani, op. cit., p.1274.

5. Name of a caste.

IMAGES OF SICKNESS

Rumi seems to have had some knowledge of certain diseases and of their symptoms and causes.¹ He uses these terms symbolically to illustrate the spiritual experiences of the lover or seeker. He speaks of illnesses such as fever, colic, delirium, *sauda'* and *safrā'*:

the illness of black gall and yellow bile, i.e. melancholic and choleric temperament and their results are external signs of the lovers.¹

Shah Abd al-Latif does not name any disease in this way although he, like Rumi, mentions the suffering and pain of lovers. This agony which the lover must go through, is a major disease, and has no cure, unless the beloved treats him or her. Our poet describes the symptoms of the lover in the following words:

جان عاشق مَتي رَت، تان دعويٰ ڪري مَ نيھ جي،
 سائو مَ، وطرُش، يا، ٽڪس، ڀنگي، صَنَس، و، ص
 نہ ڪي گوڏ گرُت، مَتا سِر سودا ڪري.

As long as the lover is healthy, he should not claim to be in love.

Longing is the condition (i.e. of love) with a pale face and his beauty gone.

Nor has he money or belongings,

In addition, he gives his life in exchange.¹

Rumi often mentions dropsy, because its symptoms resemble the lover's thirst for the beloved. He who has dropsy is never satisfied, no matter how much water he or she drinks.²

1. Shahvani, op. cit., p.153.

2. Ibid.

3. Shahvani, op. cit., p.142.

4. Schimmel, op. cit., p.154.

A similar idea is also found in the work of our poet. Like Rumi, Shah Abd al-Latif speaks of the thirst of the lover, who, no matter how much water he or she drinks, still remains thirsty. In the verse below he speaks of Suhni, and expresses her feeling:

ڪامان، پڇان، پڇران، لڇان ۽ لوڇان،
تن ۾ تنسَ پرين جي، بيان نه ڏيان،
جي سمنڊ مھ ڪريان، توءَ سُڪيائي نه ٿي.

I have been agitated in pain, cooked in grief
and am searching.

My body is so feverish because of my beloved, that even
when I drink I am never full (satisfied)

If I proceed (to drink) the sea,
that even it will not be a sip.¹

Rumi speaks of a 'canine appetite' or voracity. Such hunger he ascribes to the lover, in his state of spiritual longing or hunger.² Shah Abd al-Latif speaks of hunger in a different way. In contrast to Rumi, the yogi in the poetry of Shah Abd al-Latif representing the seeker, enjoys hunger and wandering about in this state:

قوتَ ڪَرايا ڪا پَڙي، بکَ جُهليائون ٿو،
وٺا نيرانا نڪري، جوڳي مَنجها جو،
اوسر آجا او، اُٿي گوندَر ڪَڏا.

The Kapari are weary of food, they hold the
aroma of hunger.

The yogis left the site without breakfast

They are without possession and free and are
met by sorrow.³

1. Shahvani, op. cit., p.330.

2. Schimmel, op. cit., p.154.

3. Shahvani, op. cit., p.1150.

Rumi speaks of *sorma* (collyrium) as the treatment for the troubled eyes as suggested by the physician. This image represents the role of the spiritual guide who opens the eyes of worldly men so that they see and understand what is good for their soul.¹ Shah Abd al-Latif, unlike Rumi, does not refer to many medicines, but there is, however, a rather negative reference to *sorma* (collyrium) in the *Risalo*.²

سُرمُونِ سِيَاهِي جَو، رُڻنَ کي رها،
ڪاڻي ڪارائي جي، مُڙسُ ٿي مَڙ پاءُ
اَڪِنَ ۾ اَٽڪاءُ، لالائي لالَنَ جي.

Black collyrium befits women
Being a man never apply black *kani*.³
You should put in your eyes the redness of
red (spiritual love or intoxication of divine love).

Elsewhere, however, he speaks like Rumi or *Kani*, which will make the wearer see the Truth:⁴

تُون ڪا ڪاڻي پاءُ، وَڻنَ ۾ وصالَ جي،
دُڀڻائي دُورَ ڪري، مَعْرِفَتَ مَلها،
سُپيريانَ جي سُونَهَ ۾ رُخنو ڪونَ رها،
اَڪِ اَشهَدَ چاءُ، تہ مُسلمانِي ماڻيڻ.

You should apply the *kani* of union (*wisal*)
to your eyes.

1. Schimmel, op. cit., p.155.
2. Shahvani, op. cit., p.1017
3. A thin round rod of silver or pewter with which collyrium is applied to the eyes.
4. Shahvani, op. cit., 1017.

Cast aside duality, and attain *ma'rifat*
 There should not be a fault in the beauty of the
 beloved
 When the eye witnesses (the divine light)
 then you will attain true *Musalmāni*.¹

Rumi speaks of the method of a physician who diagnoses diseases of the heart by feeling the pulse. Rumi is thus no exception to the many Persian poets who use this image. The first story of Rumi's *Masnawi* is the best example. Shah Abd al-Latif speaks of the pulse in a slightly different way. Although the pulse similarly conveys the secret of the heart, in the *Risalo* the pulse is not felt by the physician. Instead, he describes how the pulse thinks of the beloved every second. The pulse's throbbing is compared by our poet to the harp:

رُڳُونِ ٿِيُونِ رَبَّابُ، وَجَنَ وَيَلِ سَيِّكَهُمِ،
 لُڇُنِ ڪُڇُنِ نَه ٿِيُو، جَانِبُ رِي جَبَابُ،
 سو ئِي سَنَدِيدُ سُرِينِ، ڪِيسَ جِه ڪَبَابُ،
 سو ئِي عَيْنُ عَذَابُ، سو ئِي رَاحَتَ رُوحِ جِي.

The veins have become a harp (*rabab*),
 they play all the time
 Absence from the beloved is just anguish without
 a sound
 The beloved (who has made of me *kabab*) will heal
 my wounds
 He is the actual cause of suffering and he is
 the source of appeasement.²

Rumi names certain medicines each of which is supposed

1. The state of being a real Muslim.

2. Shahvani, op. cit., p.81.

to cure a certain disease. For instance, he often refers to the mixture of honey and vinegar as treatment for a liver disease.¹ Shah Abd al-Latif rarely suggests any medicine, focussing rather on the physician. He says that medicines like *sathar*² and gruel will only cure if the right type of doctor treats the patient:

اور دُکندو اُو ٿِي، هادي جِه حبيبُ،
تِرُ تفاوتُ نڪري، تِه کي ڪو طبيبُ،
رَهَنما رَقِيبُ، ساٿرِ صَحَتِ سُپَرِينِ.

His pain will disappear, whose guide is the
beloved.

The physician's treatment cannot cure him at all.

The beloved is the guide, the preserver, and even
the medicine (*sathar*).³

Shah Abd al-Latif, like Rumi, refers to the worldly physician's inability to treat the lover. For him or her the beloved is the only remedy. Sometimes the patient prays not to get well so that the beloved may stay near him for treatment.⁴

Elsewhere, our poet refers to the beloved as a physician, who cuts the limbs of the lover, tortures him and then heals him as well:

وڌي جَن وڌياسِ، وري ويڇ ٿِي سي ٿنا،
تُرَتُ ٻڌائُون ٻنِيُون، روزِ ڪِٽائُون راسِ،
هِيَرًا! تَنِينِ پاسِ، گهارِ تِه گهايلُ نه ٿين.

Those who have wounded me have become my
physician

1. Schimmel, op., p.155.

2. The leaves of a certain plant used as medicine.

3. Shahvani, op. cit., p.80.

4. Shahvani, op. cit., p.101.

They soon put on bandages, and made me well
again

O my heart! stay with them, so that you may not
get hurt.¹

The image of disease in the work of Shah Abd al-Latif is associated directly with that of love. The cause of suffering and pain is the beloved and he is the one who can cure the patient. Here the beloved may be understood as the spiritual guide or God Himself:

تُون حَبِيبُ، تُون طَبِيبُ، تُون دَارُونِ كِي دَرْدَن،
تُون دِين، تُون لَاهِيَن، ذَاتَرَا كِي دُكُنْدَن،
تَلَه قَكِيُون. فَرَق كَن، جَلَه اَمُرُ كَرِهَو اُنِ كِي.

You are the beloved, you are the physician

You are the cure of pains.

O Giver! you are the giver and you are the curer
of suffering

The medicines will only then cure,

When you command them to do so.²

1. Ibid.

2. Shahvani, op. cit., p.92.

CONCLUSIONS

Rumi and Shah Abd al-Latif shared a common Islamic background. Moreover, as mentioned earlier, Shah Abd al-Latif was an admirer of Rumi. It is therefore not surprising that there are certain significant similarities in their works. This has already been pointed out by scholars. Indeed, Nabi Bakhsh Baloch has written two articles about Rumi and Shah Abd al-Latif.¹ In his second article he draws attention to two main similarities in their works, i.e. the use of folk stories and the love of music.²

While comparing the *Risalo* and the *Masnavi* he comments on the poets, saying:

The two great saints, each with a sphere of his own, are joined in a common vision, having a unity of purpose, and are often using (*sic*) the common forms (in stories, imageries, for example) as the means for one and the same end.³

Schimmel in her work *Pain and Grace*, with reference to the Islamic background of Shah Abd al-Latif, has traced some similarities between the work of our poet and Rumi.⁴

U.M. Daudpoto does not agree with scholars on the similarities between Shah Abd al-Latif and Rumi. As he comments in one of his papers:

1. Baloch, N.A., Shah: 'The Rumi of Pakistan,' *Poet Laureate of Sindhi*, Hyderabad Sind, 1961, pp.30-37.
2. Baloch, N.A., 'Maulana Rumi and Shah Abdul Latif the Saint Poet of Sind'. *Sind University Arts Research Journal*, Hyderabad Sind, 1972-3, vols. XI & XII, pp 62-79.
3. Ibid., p.
4. Schimmel, A.M., *Pain and Grace*, Leiden, 1976, pp.

It is indeed amusing when we read the statements of scholars like Trumpp, Qalech Beg, Gurbukhshani and Sorley that Shah's mystical poetry was largely influenced by Rumi, Hafiz and Jami. Shah's form of verse is absolutely his own and its content is no less original.

... Here and there we may catch glimpses of Rumi and others in his thought, but that does not mean that he has consciously borrowed his ideas from them... All mystical writings are the record of one spiritual experience and are pervaded by a single overpowering emotion. This accounts for the similarity of ideas and diction used by the mystical poets all over the world.¹

Pir Husam al-Din Rashdi seems to have held the same opinion as Daudpoto regarding the two poets. He also does not think that there is much similarity between them, and points out two differences as already mentioned elsewhere.²

A close observation of the imagery in the works of both poets in this chapter has revealed that there are certain differences in their treatment of similar images and that sometimes parallels between the imagery of the two poets are absent. These differences in approach may be explained by reference to several factors mentioned earlier, namely:

Physical and social environment.

Local culture.

Personal approach to life.

1. Daudpoto, U.M., 'Shah Latif and Rumi', *Poet Laureate of Sindh*, Hyderabad Sind, 1961, pp.

2. Rashdi, op.cit., p.12.

Rashdi mentions two basic differences between the work of Shah Abd al-Latif and that of Rumi, saying that there is no tenderness (لطافت), nor patriotism حب الوطني in the work of Rumi as one notices in the *Risalo* of Shah Abd al-Latif.

The physical environment of Rumi was different from that of Shah Abd al-Latif. Rumi was born and brought up in Iran and Turkey and travelled through Muslim countries, visiting many cities which had religious significance for Muslims. His references therefore are mostly to those Islamic cities and places he visited. Shah Abd al-Latif was born and brought up in Sind. he travelled in and around Sind, so his references are to the local cities, villages, mountains and valleys either of Sind or neighbouring states. Our poet lived in a mixed society of Muslims and Hindus and he even travelled with yogis, visiting Hindu places of pilgrimage along with local Muslim Sufi centres.

As far as social environment is concerned, it should be noted that Rumi lived in Konya. In addition, the social group in which he moved around was different from that of Shah Abd al-Latif. Shah Abd al-Latif, on the other hand, lived in a small town Kotri, then moved to Bhit Shah a small village on a hill. Although he had some learned and Sufi friends who were from Sind, he lived among poor rural people, Hindus as well as Muslims. They were mostly illiterate, simple people who were attracted to him for his tolerant nature. They understood his simple songs of love, unity, and non-violence. Therefore they gathered around him, irrespective of their religious differences.

Since the audience of Shah Abd al-Latif came from rural areas and were uneducated, he used simple themes, with which they were familiar. Unlike Rumi, he seldom gives examples from Islamic history or literature, because his followers are not familiar with those events. Instead, he uses themes from local history and folk literature. For instance, while Rumi takes the example of Ibrahim Adham, a figure from Sufi history, to convey his idea of detachment from worldly power and honourable status for spiritual advancement, Shah Abd al-Latif uses the example of a *swami* in *Sur Mumal Rano*, who gives up his royal status and becomes a wandering ascetic.

Their choice of historical figure is also influenced by the local culture of their respective countries. For instance, Rumi chooses

heroes either from Islamic history or pre-Islamic Persia. Shah Abd al-Latif, on the other hand, in most cases, speaks of the past rulers of Sind whom he commemorates for their special virtues in keeping with certain Sindhi traditions.

There are, of course, exceptional examples where the two poets have used the same personalities from Sufi and Islamic history.

One example is the extensive reference made by both to the Prophet Muhammad, to Imam Husain and his family and to Mansur Hallaj. Both agree that Hallaj was wrongly executed. Nevertheless, Rumi expresses his preference for Shams al-Din rather than Hallaj.

Differences in the personality or personal approach to life of the two poets are also reflected in their works. As we have seen earlier, Rumi's favourite image is the sun. Its power, masculine strength and even harshness in certain cases are acceptable to the poet, because he believes that for purification it is necessary. The sun also symbolises his beloved Shams al-Din.

Shah Abd al-Latif is not very well disposed towards the sun, although he uses the same image. In his work that strength is disliked by him and considered as an oppressive power, in contrast to the delicate, smooth moonlight which is preferred by our poet.

Again, from among animals and birds, Rumi chooses the hawk to symbolise the pure soul. Although it is a hunter bird, Rumi interprets the killing and wounding inflicted by the hawk as necessary for the purpose of purification. The choice by Shah Abd al-Latif of the swan to represent the pure soul reflects the tenderness of his nature.

Another difference in their personal characters is reflected in Rumi's frankness in discussing the intimate relationship between husband and wife. He even refers to the grief of the eunuch and

mūkhannas (a term used for a male prostitute)¹ in his work as a symbol of the seeker's grief in his attempt to expound Sufi ideas.² Shah Abd al-Latif, on the other hand, seems reluctant to mention anything related to physical contact or sensual relationships. Although he does refer to the heart burnings and suffering of his heroines in separation from their beloved, there is always a distance between the lovers, even when they are supposed to be together. This may reflect his own personality or his audience who might have misunderstood his work if he had used such symbolism.

Apart from these environmental, social, cultural and individual differences, there are some technical dissimilarities in their work as well. Being a scholar as well as a poet Rumi attempts to be systematic to some extent in his writing. Probably for this reason he adopts a narrative style. The style of Shah Abd al-Latif is more distinctly lyrical, with less attention being paid to logical development. Since his folk stories are well-known, he comments only briefly on the dramatic theme, because he can assume that the audience is familiar with the events in these. There are thus certain noticeable formal differences in the style of the two poets.

1. Schimmel, op. cit., pp.131–132.

2. *mukhannas* is a very old figure in Sufi lore, being contrasted with the true 'man'.

APPENDIX

SEMI-HISTORICAL AND FOLK STORIES IN THE POETRY OF SHAH ABD AL-LATIF

In the poetry of Shah Abd al-Latif one comes across references to nine semi-historical and folk-stories. The poet does not narrate these stories in his poetry, but refers to them as assuming that his audience will be familiar with them, because of their popularity in Sind.

Of these nine stories eight are based on local themes, either from Sind or other neighbouring states in India, now in Pakistan, like Baluchistan, Rajasthan, Punjab and so on. There are seven stories mostly based on love and romance. The eighth story concerns the bravery of a handicapped fisherboy called Moriro.

The ninth story refers to the Karbala tragedy. For some time it has been a subject of controversy as to whether Shah Abd al-Latif composed this *sur* or whether it was written by another poet but attributed to Shah Abd al-Latif. Modern scholarship has tended to the conclusion that on linguistic evidence this *sur* was composed by him.¹

In view of the fact that the Karbala tragedy is a well known historical event, it has not been included in the appendix. Out of the eight folk stories, Marui-Umar is also excluded from the appendix because it has already been discussed in the thesis at length.¹

The seven folk stories are as follows:--

1. Gurbukhsanl, op. cit., p.786.

- i. Suhni-Mehar
 - ii. Sasui-Punhu
 - iii. Sorath-Rai Diyach
 - iv. Lila-Chanesar
 - v. Nuri-Jam Tamachi
 - vi. Mumal-Rano
 - vii. Moriro and the Shark.
1. See pp. 130-49.

SUHNI-MEHAR

During the reign of Shah Jahan (1627-1655), the Mughal ruler of India, there lived a wealthy potter Tulla in Gujrat (Punjab) who was popular because of his beautiful pottery.

At the same time there lived an affluent merchant Mirza Ali in Bukhara who had a beloved only son, Izzat Beg.

Having received permission from his father, Izzat Beg set off on a business trip to India. He went to Delhi, visited Lahore and other big cities of India. When he reached Gujrat, he heard about the skill of Tulla and his beautiful pottery.

He sent one of his servants to buy some fine pots from him. When the servant returned, instead of praising Tulla's pots, he began to praise the beauty of Suhni, Tulla's daughter. Izzat Beg became curious, so he went to Tulla's shop, bought some pots, and saw Suhni with whom he fell in love.

On the pretext of buying pots, he began to visit Tulla daily, in order to have a glimpse of Suhni.

When Izzat Beg had used up most of his money, and his house was full of pots, he opened up a shop and started selling at low prices what he had bought for high ones. Then he started buying pots on loan from Tulla which he could not pay back, as he had already finished all his money. Tulla started demanding money. Finally Izzat Beg asked Tulla to employ him, so that he could repay his debt. In this way he had a chance to see Suhni.

Tulla asked him to look after his buffaloes. Thus he became known as Mehar or Mainhwal. Suhni had fallen in love with him too, so they used to meet secretly.

When Tulla learnt about their love, he was furious and dismissed Mehar from his service. He married Suhni by force to Dam. Suhni never approved of this marriage and was always longing and yearning to meet Mehar.

Mehar became a yogi and sat on the bank of the Chenab river opposite the town where Suhni lived. When Suhni heard this, she used to swim across the river with the help of an earthenware jar every night to meet Mehar.

On one occasion Suhni's sister-in-law saw Suhni crossing the river. She told her brother about this and he taunted and abused Suhni for her infidelity and threatened her, if she still continued the same practice. In spite of all this, nothing could prevent Suhni from visiting her beloved.

One day her sister-in-law found her hidden jar and changed the baked one for an unbaked earthenware jar.

That particular night was dark and stormy, a night when sailors dreaded to sail across the river for fear of their lives. Suhni plunged into the river with the unbaked jar. After a short while, the jar began to sink and it was finally submerged. Then Suhni

was left to the mercy of the waves. She could not swim for long as her limbs were exhausted. She began to drown and called for help. No one dared to risk his life to enter such a rough river except Mehar.

When he heard Suhni's call he jumped into the river, to save her, but it was too late, and both of them were drowned in the river. As the story goes, Mehar caught the corpse of Suhni in the water and breathed his last in that embrace. Thus the two lovers were united for ever.

In another version of the story, it is said that Suhni lived on the west bank of the river Indus (in Sind) and her husband Dam lived on the East bank. When Suhni married Dam, she had to cross the Indus river to go to her husband's town. On the way, the bridal party stopped to get some milk from Mehar who happened to be there with his buffaloes. As she drank the milk she fell in love with Mehar. Thus their love began. The rest of this version of the story is similar in nature to the first one.¹

SASUI-PUNHU

There once lived a Brahman called Na'un and his wife had a great desire to have a daughter. After longing for years a beautiful girl was born to them. According to their custom, they asked astrologers to look into the horoscope of the child. They predicted that she would marry a Muslim and thus dishonour their family.

In order to avoid such a humiliation they put the child in a box and threw her into the river. The box floated and reached a town called Bhambhore, where a washerman named Muhammad

1. Gurbukhshani, H.M., *Ruh Rihan*, Karachi, 1933, pp.61-78.
Advani, op. cit., pp.89-90.
Shahvani, op. cit., pp.172-81.
Laxman, Koomal, *Folk Tales of Pakistan*, New Delhi, 1976, pp.45-52.

was washing clothes, with his friends. When he saw the box, he brought it out of water and opened it. To his surprise he saw a beautiful girl in it.

He took the child to his wife and named her Sasui. They brought her up as their own child. She was loved by everyone in the neighbourhood, firstly because she was beautiful and secondly because she had a very pleasing personality. As she grew up, every one talked about her beauty.

In those days, caravans of merchants used to come to Sind, for the purpose of trade, mostly from Kech Makran (Baluchistan). While passing through Bhambhore, some of the caravan people mentioned the beauty of Sasui to the prince Punhu.

Punhu was the son of Ari Jam the ruler of Kech Makran. Being a young man, and curious to see Sasui about whom he had heard so much, he planned to go to Sind. He disguised himself as a merchant, arranged for a caravan, and left for Bhambhore. The goods he chose for his caravan were perfumes, scents and other toiletries mostly used by girls.

As their caravan reached Bhambhore, all the people rushed to buy goods from them. Sasui was amongst those who wanted to see these wares. Punhu was fascinated by her rare beauty and fell in love with her. She too fell in love with him.

Sasui requested one of her close friends to reveal this secret to her parents. With the help of one of Sasui's friends, Punhu asked her parents for her hand.

At first Muhammad the washerman refused to give his daughter's hand to a stranger, especially as he did not know his caste. Sasui's friend assured him that Punhu was a washerman too. In order to prove this, Muhammad gave some dirty clothes to Punhu to wash and asked him to hand them over to the customers.

For Punhu, who was a prince, this was an ordeal. He damaged his hands and tore the clothes apart while washing them. Sasui

secretly advised him to put a piece of gold in every torn garment and then to hand them over to the customers. This Punhu did very happily. When Sasui's father asked the customers about Punhu's work, they praised him. Thus he was convinced that Punhu was a washerman.

Sasui was married to Punhu and he settled with his in-laws washing clothes. When Punhu's friends returned to Kech they told Ari Jam and his brothers that Punhu was doing such a menial job having settled in Sind. They were upset and angry. They sent him numerous messages but he did not listen to them. When Punhu's brothers saw that their father was getting restless for his son, they set off for Bhambhore promising to bring him back.

Punhu's brothers came as guests and stayed with Punhu. Sasui welcomed them and did everything to please them. They tried to persuade Punhu to go back, but he refused saying that he could not leave Sasui.

The brothers planned another tactic. While eating and drinking they deliberately made Punhu drink so much that he lost his senses. Sasui was asleep, so they tied up Punhu on a camel's back and left Bhambhore at night.

When Sasui woke up in the morning, she discovered the deceit of her brothers-in-law. She cried, lamented and decided to leave Bhambhore to follow Punhu on an unknown path.

She set off on the most dangerous road, all alone, passing through rocky mountains full of wild animals. She was determined to go to Kech for the sake of Punhu. Poets have narrated her pathetic appeal to her brothers-in-law, who had deserted her. She complained to the mountains, and even requested the sun to delay setting, so that she could follow the tracks of her beloved.

On the way she reached the Mabbar Hills, where she saw a shepherd, who looked at her with evil intentions. According to the traditional sources she prayed to God to save her. So the

earth parted and she jumped inside to save her honour, and the earth closed the door behind her.

When the shepherd saw this he repented and built a grave on the place where Sasui had disappeared, and he settled there.

I.I. Qazi describes Sasui's death as follows:-

Just near Kech her delicate health gives way and she dies mysteriously in the mountains.¹

When Punhu became conscious, he was very worried and requested his brothers to set him free to go back to Sasui, but they did not listen to him. When they reached Kech, they handed him over to his father who was pleased to see him. Punhu, however, could not bear his separation from Sasui. So his father permitted him to go back and bring Sasui with him.

When he was crossing the same path which he had just passed, he saw a newly-built grave. He asked the shepherd who narrated the whole story.

He discovered that it was Sasui's grave, whereupon he died of extreme grief on the spot. He was buried there in the same place. Thus the two lovers were united in death, and reached the place where nobody could separate them.¹

SORATH-RAI-DYACH

Once there ruled a Raja called Rai Diyach at Jhunagarh in Kathiawar. He had a sister who was childless. Once she visited

1. Qazi, Elsa, *Risalo of Shah Abd al-Latif*, Hyderabad, 1965, p.247.

2. Gurbukhshani, op. cit., pp.79-90.

Advani, op. cit., pp.125-26.

Shahvani, op. cit., pp.171-175.

Laxman, op. cit., pp.56-62.

a saintly man and asked him to pray for her to have a son. He told her that she would have a son, who would kill his uncle, Rai Diyach. She was disturbed and told the saintly man that she would prefer to remain childless than to have a son like the one he had predicted.

After some time, a boy was born to her. Thinking about the saint's prediction she became worried. So she put the boy in a wooden box and threw him in the river. The box reached the neighbouring kingdom of Raja Ani Rai. A bard and his wife who came to the river bank to fetch water from the river saw the box and took it from the waves. They were very pleased to find a baby boy in the box. They adopted him as their own son and named him Bijal.

They taught him to sing and play an instrument called the *chang*.¹ One day while he was passing through a forest, he heard melodious music coming from one of the trees. He saw birds and wild animals surrounding the tree to listen to the sweet music. When he looked up, he saw that the music was coming from the dried intestines of a deer.

Bijal took these magical intestines with him and fitted them to his *chang* as strings. Thereafter when he played music he attracted animals and birds towards him. Thus he became very popular for his music.

At the time Bijal was born, Raja Ani Rai's wife gave birth to an eighth daughter. They put her in a box and threw her into the river. By chance the box floated to Raja Rai Diyach's kingdom, where a pottery maker, Ratna, found it. As he did not have a child he was pleased to have a beautiful girl, and he adopted her as his child, calling her Sorath. She grew up to be a most beautiful girl.

When Raja Ani Rai heard about her beauty, being unaware of the fact that she was his own daughter, he asked Ratna for her hand in marriage. Ratna willingly accepted the proposal. When Raja Rai Diyach heard this, he accused Ratna of not giving his

1. The *chang* is a musical instrument similar to the fiddle.

beautiful daughter to him to be their own queen. Ratna never expected this proposal and he changed his mind, agreeing to marry Sorath to Raja Rai Diyach.

When Raja Ani Rai heard this, he became jealous and he attacked the fort of Jhunagarh, laying siege to it for one full year without success. Being defeated he announced that anyone who brought him the head of Raja Rai Diyach would be rewarded with a full plate of gold coins.

The wife of Bijal who was fully confident of her husband's abilities, took the plate of gold, and told the bearer that Bijal would fulfil Raja Ani Rai's wish very soon. When she told Bijal about it, he was unwilling at first, then agreed to it.

Bijal took his *chang* and left Jhunagarh. When he came near to the palace of Rai Diyach he started playing a tune which pierced the heart of Raja Rai Diyach. He told Bijal to ask for any reward he wanted. He offered him gold, precious stones, property, even his kingdom. But Bijal told him that he was no ordinary minstrel who yearned for material goods. He needed something which Raja might refuse and for which he might be blamed for not being generous.

Raja became impatient, but the tune played by the minstrel had such a magical effect on him that he was ready to sacrifice anything in the world. He promised Bijal that he would give him anything, so Bijal asked for his head. Raja smiled at his simple request, and told him that a head was a mere bundle of bones, from which he would not profit. Therefore he should ask for something valuable, but Bijal insisted on his head.

So, Raja Rai Diyach took out his sword and cut off his own head to present as a mere gift to this great musician. Taking the head, Bijal rushed to Raja Ani Rai to receive his reward. When he reached the Raja the latter abused him for killing such a generous Raja. He asked Bijal to leave his kingdom immediately.

Bijal rushed back to Jhunagarh, where he saw the funeral pyre where Sorath was performing her 'Sati' tradition. Bijal could not stand his conscience any more, so he also jumped into the fire and ended his life.¹

LILA-CHANESAR

Raja Chanesar was a well-known ruler of the Sumra dynasty who ruled Dewal (in Sind). He had a beautiful queen Lila who was very fond of diamonds and jewellery.

Contemporary to him was Rana Khanghar who ruled Lakhpatt in Kutchh. He had an only daughter Kaunru, who was very beautiful and engaged to her cousin Utmadi. Being the only daughter of Rana Khanghar and Mirkhi, too much love had spoiled her habits. She was haughty and proud of her beauty and was always worried about her looks.

One day, her friend Jamni, who was the sister of Utmadi taunted Kaunru about her attitude, saying that she was behaving as if she was going to be the queen of Chanesar! Kaunru was hurt and told her mother that either she would have to marry Chanesar or she would commit suicide. Her parents became alarmed, but they were aware that Chanesar was married and loved his queen Lila very much. Nevertheless they wanted to try their best to help their daughter.

After consulting her husband, Mirkhi and Kaunru disguised themselves as traders and left for Dewal. There they managed to consult Jakhiro the king's minister and requested him to help them. He promised that he would persuade Chanesar to marry Kaunru.

1. Gurbukhshani, op. cit., pp.96-124.
 Advani, op. cit., pp.299-300.
 Shahvanl, op. cit., pp.881-885.
 Laxman, op. cit., pp.27-37.

When Jakhiro spoke to Chanesar about Kaunru, the king lost his temper and told him that he should not talk like that in future. In Lila's presence he could not even think about any other woman. Jakhiro offered his apologies to Mirkhi and Kaunru and told them that there was no hope, and that it was therefore useless for them to try.

Kaunru and her mother put on ordinary dresses to disguise themselves and went to Lila's palace. There they asked Lila to employ them in her service as they had abandoned their country because of poverty. Lila felt sorry for them and employed them as personal servants. Kaunru was asked to arrange Chanesar's bed every day. Time passed without any hope of success.

One day as Kaunru was preparing the bed for Chanesar, tears dropped from her eyes. Lila who had entered the room unnoticed, saw Kaunru's tears. She asked her the reason for the tears. Kaunru told her that at one time she had also been a princess and had lived a luxurious life like her. She told her that instead of using lanterns and lamps, she used to light her palace with 'Naulakha Har' (a necklace worth 900,000 rupees).

At first, Lila was hesitant to believe her, but she soon became anxious to see that necklace. When Kaunru showed her, Lila asked her for what price she was prepared to part with it.

Kaunru told Lila that she would give her necklace free to her but on one condition. Lila became impatient and asked for the condition. Kaunru told her that the necklace would be hers if she would just let her spend one night with Chanesar.

When Lila spoke to Chanesar he did not approve of her idea. One day, Chanesar came home after a party and was heavily drunk. Lila considered it her best opportunity and she allowed Kaunru into her bedroom.

In the morning when Chanesar woke up, he was shocked to see Kaunru instead of Lila sharing his bed. He was very angry

and was about to leave the room, when Mirkhi (Kaunru's mother) told him that Lila had sold him to Kaunru in return for the 'Naulakha Har'. Chanesar considered it an insult and humiliation to be exchanged for a mere necklace.

As his revenge, he deserted Lila and married Kaunru who had given so much sacrifice for him.

Lila tried to apologise, cried and begged but Chanesar refused to listen to her, saying that she had preferred jewellery to him and that he did not love her any more. Lila after giving up all hope left his house and went to her parents. There she spent her days in misery, solitude and repentance.

Jakhiro who was the minister of Chanesar, was engaged to one of the girls from Lila's family. But they refused to give her hand to him, after the fate of Lila. The minister approached Lila, who intervened, but asked him to bring Chanesar on his wedding, to which he happily agreed.

On the occasion of Jakhiro's wedding, Chanesar came along with the bridegroom party. Lila with other girls welcomed the party with dancing and singing, but her face was veiled. Chanesar was pleased at their performance and he was especially fascinated at the dancing and the voice of the one whose face was veiled. Chanesar begged the girl to unveil her face as he could not tolerate the situation any more. As soon as Lila opened her veil, Chanesar fell down on the floor and died. When Lila saw this she also died. Thus the souls of the two lovers were united for ever in eternity.¹

1. Advani, *op. cit.*, pp.223-224.

Shahvani, *op. cit.*, pp.665-671.

Laxman, *op. cit.*, pp.38-44.

Gurbukhshani, *op. cit.*, pp.1-10.

NURI-JAM TAMACHI

During the reign of Jam Tamachi, one of the great rulers of the Samma dynasty, there lived a community of fishermen, (*'Muhanas'*) around the Lake Kinjhar. These people lived in very unhygienic conditions, because of their poverty, and their profession. They earned their living by catching fish and selling them in the market. No one wanted to sit beside them because they smelt of fish. Their clothes were tattered and filthy and they were generally regarded as being the lowest of the low.

Amongst these untidy, ugly and evil-smelling people, there was an exceptional beauty, who in her appearance and behaviour seemed to belong to a high class society. Her name was Nuri and she was indeed a real 'light'.

One day, Jam Tamachi the ruler of Sind boarded a ship on a pleasure trip to do some hunting and fishing. By chance, he happened to see Nuri, who was full of delicacy, and modesty and politeness. She was beautiful, but she was not proud. She was humble, courteous and loving.

King Jam Tamachi was fascinated to see such a rare beauty among these fishermen. He fell in love with her and asked her parents for her hand in marriage. The poor fishermen were overjoyed at their relationship with the king, since even the ordinary people disliked and looked down on them because of their low caste.

Jam Tamachi exempted all of them from paying any tax. He presented the whole of Lake Kinjhar as a gift to the fishermen. Besides these, he bestowed huge gifts on them. As a result their standard of living was raised, and they started living a better life.

Jam Tamachi had many queens when he married Nuri, but he loved her most especially for her modesty and humble nature.

One day he asked all his queens to dress up in their best clothes and to get ready. He would choose the most attractive one of them and would take her on an outing. Every one tried their level best and put on expensive clothes to look pretty. But Nuri wore the ordinary dress which she used to wear before she became a queen. The other queens laughed at her foolishness.

When Jam Tamachi came to make his inspection, he gave the verdict in favour of Nuri. He was so moved by her modesty and by the fact that even after becoming a queen she had not changed. Thus he announced that she was his chief queen, and that he would take her for an outing with him.¹

MUMAL— RANO

In the early 15th century, Raja Nand ruled over Mirpur Mathelo (a city in Sind). He had nine daughters, the most beautiful of whom was Mumal, whilst Sumal the eldest one excelled them all in wisdom.

One day the Raja went hunting and killed a wild pig. One of the pig's teeth had the magical power to dry the water from the river bed. The Raja with the help of this tooth dried the river bed and secretly buried all his wealth under the water.

A magician learned of this secret. When he heard about the Raja's absence from the palace, he disguised himself as a beggar and passed by the palace lamenting and crying in a very pathetic voice. When Mumal heard him, she took pity on him and called him to the palace and asked him the reason for his misery. He told her that he was suffering from an acute type of disease which could only be cured if he had a pig's tooth. Mumal remembered that she had once seen such a tooth in the possession of her

1. Advani, op. cit., p.285.
Shahvani, op. cit., pp.853-856.
Laxman, op. cit., pp.53-55.
Gurbukhshani, op. cit., pp.55-60.

father. Being unaware of its magical power, she searched for the tooth, found it and handed it to the beggar who left the palace blessing her.

One day when the Raja wanted to check his wealth, he searched for the tooth but could not find it. After inquiring from his daughters, he learned that Mumal had given it away to a beggar. The Raja was very angry and was about to kill Mumal when Sumal her wise sister intervened and told him that she would find him as much wealth as he had lost.

Sumal was an expert in magic and she took her sisters to Landano (a town in Jaisalmer) and built a beautiful palace there called Kak-Mahal, on the bank of the river Kak. Everything in that palace was based on deception and sorcery. On the gates of the palace she stationed terrifying lions, which groaned and roared as a traveller entered. Around the palace a moat was constructed, which was shallow but its bottom was set with mirrors which gave the illusion of great depth. The pathway from the palace gate to Mumal's chamber was so confusing that no one could find their way.

Sumal then made a proclamation that whoever wanted to marry a beauty such as Mumal, had to cross the Kak-Mahal and win her as his bride. All the young, wealthy princes, lords and kings wanted to try their luck. So many of them came with lots of wealth. After losing everything they left bewildered. When a contestant entered the palace he was terrified by the frightful atmosphere. The maid-servant Natar who was supposed to guide the traveller, very cleverly left him in a confused state. In the meantime Sumal's robbers would come and rob him of all his possessions and he would be left to run away to save his life.

In this manner the daughters collected much wealth and gave it to their father.

During that time, Hamir Sumro ruled Thar (Sind). He had three good friends who were his ministers as well. All of them were

very fond of hunting and enjoying themselves. One day as they went hunting, they saw a yogi in the forest, sitting alone under a tree. They greeted him and asked him why he was sitting in such a deserted place.

The yogi heaved a sigh and told them that he had once been a king and had enjoyed his life like them. But the love and beauty of Mumal had brought him to the stage in which they had found him. This story made these four friends curious to see Mumal and try their luck.

King Hamir Sumro and two of his friends attempted but failed. Rano Maindharo who was the cleverest of them all suspected that everything was based on deception, to engulf the traveller. He succeeded in reaching the sitting room, where he found seven identical beds. Suspecting a trap, he checked them all with his arrows and discovered that under six of the beds were deep ditches with sharp weapons. Whichever victim sat on any of them would fall into the ditch and perish.

Rano Maindharo found the safe bed for himself and waited for Mumal's arrival. She came with a number of her friends, but somehow he recognised her. When Mumal became convinced of his wisdom she agreed to marry him.

King Hamir Sumro asked Rano Maindharo to let him see the beauty (Mumal) for whom numerous admirers had lost their lives. Rano agreed but told him that Mumal might object to his entering the palace. Therefore he advised him to disguise himself as a milkman and follow him.

When Mumal saw a stranger, she asked Rano who told her that he was a milkman. Mumal recognised the king, but asked him to milk a cow for her. After great trouble he did so and returned to his other friends abusing Rano for humiliating him. So he promised to himself that he would punish Rano for illtreating him. The three friends returned except for Rano, who stayed with Mumal.

After some days King Hamir Sumro sent Rano a message to come and visit his friends at home. As soon as Rano reached Umarkot, Hamir Sumro arrested him and put him in prison. At his sister's intervention (who was Hamir Sumro's queen), he set Rano free on condition that he would not see Mumal any more.

As soon as he was set free, Rano used to visit Mumal secretly every night, by riding on his camel and returning at dawn.

Eventually Rano was imprisoned for visiting Mumal secretly. Finally, Hamir Sumro gave him permission to see Mumal whenever he wished to.

Because of Rano's long absence Mumal was very depressed and in order to cheer her up her sister Sumal put on Rano's clothes and shared her bed.

When Rano came at night, and saw a man sleeping with Mumal he became very angry and wanted to kill them both. Then he changed his mind and leaving his walking stick beside Mumal he went away.

When Mumal woke up, she realised her mistake. She sent numerous messages to Rano, to come and listen to her story but he paid no heed to them. When she saw that it was no use wasting time and waiting for him, she disguised herself as a male trader and left for Umarkot. There she settled opposite the house of Rano, and gradually managed to strike up a friendship with him.

Rano was very fond of playing chess, a game which Mumal also played well and she began to spend most of her time playing with Rano. One day, while playing, a mole on her arm was exposed, which Rano recognised. Mumal begged for forgiveness but of no avail.

She therefore set up a pyre and jumped into the flames. When Rano heard this he also jumped into the fire. Thus both

the lovers were united for ever.¹

MORIRO—SUR GHATU — (Shark hunters)

When Raja Dilarai ruled over Somiyani (a state in Sind), there lived a fisherman called Obhayo who had seven sons. Six of them were healthy and strong but the seventh was handicapped and weak. His name was Moriro, whom the other brothers used to leave behind to look after the home, whilst they used to go daily to fish.

One day six of them went to fish and did not return home. The family became worried about them, so Moriro left home to find news about his brothers. He soon learnt that they had been caught up in the whirlpool in Kalachi, had been drowned and devoured by the shark which lived there.

Moriro, though handicapped, was very intelligent. With the consent of his relatives, he decided to avenge the shark by killing it. He ordered the iron-mongers to build a cage big enough to accomodate him. On the outer sides of the cage, he asked them to fix sharp pointed hooks and huge piercing blades. Moriro sat inside the cage and asked his companions to tie strong ropes to the cage. He told them to sail towards the whirlpool of Kalachi—where they dropped the cage in the water, as instructed by Moriro.

As soon as the cage fell into the water, the shark opened its huge mouth to engulf it, but the sharp blades and hooks pierced its jaws. Moriro shook the ropes, by which he indicated to his friends that they should pull him out. Numerous people, with the

1. Gurbukhshan, *op. cit.*, pp.11–38.

Saib Muhammad Urs, *Sur Mumal Rano*, Hyderabad, 1960, pp.20–30.

Advani, *op. cit.*, pp.233–35.

Shahvani, *op. cit.*, pp.695–704.

Laxman, *op. cit.*, pp.13–24.

help of bullocks, pulled the ropes, thus dragging the cage out along with the shark, onto the sea shore. All of them rushed with their weapons and soon killed the monster. Moriro was found safe and sound inside the cage.

They cut open the shark and found the bones of the six brothers of Moriro inside the shark. Moriro took the bones of his brothers, buried them near a mountain two miles away from Karachi, and settled there.

1. Gurbukhshani, *op. cit.*, pp.91–95.

Advani, *op. cit.*, pp.293–294.

Shahvani, *op. cit.*, pp.871–874.

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ERRATA

Page No:	Line No:	Error	Correct as:-
2	15	Ghurids	Ghaurids
2	15	Tughluqs	Tughlaqs
4	11	Ghurids	Ghaurids
7	17	lwith	with
9	24	1721	1718
10	16	have written	have been written
13	18	Halla	Hala
14	13	shown	show
18	2	Sanyasis	Sannyasis
30	20	Muhammad	Muhammadi
36	4	1658-1739	1702-82.
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37	17	Daisi	Desi
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40	10	Trump	Trumpp
61	1	1536-1624	1538-1623
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67	7	Winder	Windur
77	5	headlessness	heedlessness
83	4	<i>Surindo</i> ²	<i>Surindo</i> ¹
84	22	towm	town
85	27,28	More over..... Circumstances	Delete
88	5	me ⁷	me
96	10	nelp	help
122	20	Dvarka	Duwarka
123	26	Dvarka	Duwarka

126	16	Vishnuvitess	Vishnuvites
129	1	1620AD--1708AD	1622--1712AD
130	11	in evitably	inevitably
133	5	aroud	around
135	24	Jameo	Janeo
136	23	northerly	northernly
141	12	ahimsa	ahinsa
163	8	my beloved	for my beloved
169	3	wich	which
175	17	cam	can
186	10	mislead	misled
194	15	bloved	beloved
197	22	Couples	Couplets
200	9	Secomd	Second
206	12	whcih	which
236	24	سُجِّي	- ة
243	10	sum up.	sum up,
249	11	you	your
251	19	1133A.H	1718 A.D
262	6	دبھ	ڈبھ
264	9	سُد	سُد
268	8	مازاع	مازاغ
270	18	sympolise	symbolise
273	13	hea.	hear
277	26	potter	washerman.
297	13	left	left for

پڙهندڙ نسل - پ ن

The Reading Generation

1960 جي ڏهاڪي ۾ عبدالله حسين ”اُداس نسلين“ نالي ڪتاب لکيو. 70 واري ڏهاڪي ۾ وري ماڻِڪَ ”لڙهندڙ نسل“ نالي ڪتاب لکي پنهنجي دورَ جي عڪاسي ڪرڻَ جي ڪوشش ڪئي. امداد حُسينيءَ وري 70 واري ڏهاڪي ۾ ئي لکيو:

انڌي ماءُ جڻيندي آهي اونڌا سونڌا ٻارَ
ايندڙ نسل سَمورو هوندو گونگا ٻوڙا ٻارَ

هر دور جي نوجوانن کي اُداس، لڙهندڙ، ڪڙهندڙ، پڙهندڙ، ٻرندڙ، چُرندڙ، ڪِرندڙ، اوسيئڙو ڪَندڙ، پاڙي، ڪاڻو، پاڇوڪڙ، ڪاوڙيل ۽ وڙهندڙ نسلن سان منسوب ڪري سگهجي ٿو، پر اسان انهن سڀني وچان ”پڙهندڙ“ نسل جا ڳولائو آهيون. ڪتابن کي ڪاڳر تان ڪڍي ڪمپيوٽر جي دنيا ۾ آڻڻ، ٻين لفظن ۾ برقي ڪتاب يعني e-books ٺاهي ورهائڻ جي وسيلي پڙهندڙ نسل کي وَڌڻ، ويجهڻ ۽ هِڪَ ٻئي کي ڳولي سَهڪاري تحريڪ جي رستي تي آڻڻَ جي آسَ رکون ٿا.

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ويندا. جيڪڏهن ڪو اهڙي ڪوشش ڪري ٿو ته پڪ ڄاڻو ته اهو به ڪوڙو آهي.

جهڙيءَ طرح وڻن جا پن ساوا، ڳاڙها، نيلا، پيلا يا ناسي هوندا آهن اهڙيءَ طرح پڙهندڙ نسل وارا پن به مختلف آهن ۽ هوندا. اهي ساڳئي ئي وقت اداس ۽ پڙهندڙ، ٻرندڙ ۽ پڙهندڙ، سُست ۽ پڙهندڙ يا وڙهندڙ ۽ پڙهندڙ به ٿي سگهن ٿا. ٻين لفظن ۾ پن ڪا خصوصي ۽ تالي لڳل ڪلب Exclusive Club نه آهي.

ڪوشش اها هوندي ته پن جا سڀ ڪم ڪار سهڪاري ۽ رضاڪار بنيادن تي ٿين، پر ممڪن آهي ته ڪي ڪم اجرتي بنيادن تي به ٿين. اهڙي حالت ۾ پن پاڻ هڪٻئي جي مدد ڪرڻ جي اصول هيٺ ڏي وٺ ڪندا ۽ غير تجارتي non-commercial رهندا. پنن پاران ڪتابن کي ڊجيٽائيز digitize ڪرڻ جي عمل مان ڪو به مالي فائدو يا نفعو حاصل ڪرڻ جي ڪوشش نه ڪئي ويندي.

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پنن کي کليل اکرن ۾ صلاح ڏجي ٿي ته هو وس پئانڊڙ وڌ کان وڌ ڪتاب خريد ڪري ڪتابن جي ليکڪن، ڇپائيندڙن ۽ ڇاپيندڙن کي همٿائين. پر ساڳئي وقت علم حاصل ڪرڻ ۽ ڄاڻ کي ڦهلائڻ جي ڪوشش دوران ڪنهن به رڪاوٽ کي نه مڃن.

شيخ آياز علم، ڄاڻ، سمجھ ۽ ڏاهپ کي گيت، بيت، سٽ، پُڪار
سان تشبيهه ڏيندي انهن سڀني کي بمن، گولين ۽ بارود جي مد مقابل
بيهاريو آهي. اياز چوي ٿو ته:

گيت به ڄڻ گوريلا آهن، جي ويريءَ تي وار ڪرڻ ٿا.

... ..

ڄڻ ڄڻ جاڙ وڌي ٿي جڳ ۾، هو ٻوليءَ جي آڙ چڻ ٿا،
ريٽيءَ تي راتاها ڪن ٿا، موتي منجهه پهڙا چڻ ٿا،

... ..

ڪالهه هيا جي سُرخ گلن جيئن، اڄڪلهه نالا پيلا آهن؛
گيت به ڄڻ گوريلا آهن.....

... ..

هي بيت اٿي، هي بم - گولو، جيڪي به کڻين، جيڪي به کڻين!
مون لاءِ ٻنهي ۾ فرق نه آ، هي بيت به بم جو ساٿي آ،
جنهن رڻ ۾ رات ڪيا راڙا، تنهن هڏ ۽ ڄم جو ساٿي آ -

ان حساب سان اڻڄاڻائي کي پاڻ تي اهو سوچي مڙهڻ ته ”هاڻي
ويڙهه ۽ عمل جو دور آهي، اُن ڪري پڙهڻ تي وقت نه وڃايو“ نادانيءَ جي
نشاني آهي.

پڻ جو پڙهڻ عام ڪتابي ڪيڙن وانگر رڳو نصابي ڪتابن تائين
محدود نه هوندو. رڳو نصابي ڪتابن ۾ پاڻ کي قيد ڪري ڇڏڻ سان سماج
۽ سماجي حالتن تان نظر کڄي ويندي ۽ نتيجي طور سماجي ۽ حڪومتي
پاليسيون policies اڻڄاڻن ۽ نادانن جي هٿن ۾ رهنديون. پڻ نصابي ڪتابن
سان گڏوگڏ ادبي، تاريخي، سياسي، سماجي، اقتصادي، سائنسي ۽ ٻين
ڪتابن کي پڙهي سماجي حالتن کي بهتر بنائڻ جي ڪوشش ڪندا.

پڙهندڙ نسل جا پڻ سڀني کي چو، چالاڪ ۽ ڪينئن جهڙن سوالن کي هر بيان تي لاڳو ڪرڻ جي ڪوٺ ڏين ٿا ۽ انهن تي ويچار ڪرڻ سان گڏ جواب ڳولڻ کي پنهنجو حق، فرض ۽ اٽل گهرج unavoidable necessity سمجهندي ڪتابن کي پاڻ پڙهڻ ۽ وڌ کان وڌ ماڻهن تائين پهچائڻ جي ڪوشش جديد ترين طريقن وسيلي ڪرڻ جو ويچار رکن ٿا.

توهان به پڙهڻ، پڙهائڻ ۽ ڦهلائڻ جي ان سهڪاري تحريڪ ۾ شامل ٿي سگهو ٿا، بس پنهنجي اوسي پاسي ۾ ڏسو، هر قسم جا ڳاڙها توڙي نيرا، ساوا توڙي پيلا پن ضرور نظر اچي ويندا.

وڻ وڻ کي مون پاڪي پائي چيو ته ”منهنجا پيءُ
 پهتو منهنجي من ۾ تنهنجي پڻ پڻ جو پڙلاءُ.“
 - اياز (ڪي جو بيجل بوليو)